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A WORLD CAN END



AUTHOR IN PEASANT COSTUME
(SUMMER OF 1914, TROITSKOE)



A WORLD CAN END

IRINA SKARIÄTINA

(Mrs. Victor F. Blakeslee)

Formerly Countess Irina Wladimirovna Keller



NEW YORK

HARRISON SMITH & ROBERT HAAS

*Copyright, 1931, by
Jonathan Cape and
Harrison Smith, Inc.*

*First Published, 1931
Second Printing August, 1931
Third Printing September, 1931
Fourth Printing November, 1931
Fifth Printing December, 1931
Sixth Printing December, 1934*

Printed in the United States of America

MA 31 '35

To the Memory of
My Father and Mother

Introduction

THOUGH by birth I am a Russian, with no foreign blood in my veins except a few drops inherited from a Tartar ancestor, by marriage I am now an American and have lived in this country for nearly eight years. My life in Russia and my life in America are so different that I have the uncanny sensation of having lived twice: first in Russia, where I died and was buried, and am now lying in our peaceful country cemetery — and now here in America where I was born again and where I am now living my second life with the unusual faculty of being able to remember everything that happened during my first life in Russia. And though as years go I am not old, according to this strange experience of a dual existence I often feel very old and very worldly wise indeed. As I compare my two existences, it is amazing to see what a difference there is between them. I was born in a family where wealth was not acquired during the lifetime of my parents, or grandparents, but had been with us for centuries and was therefore taken for granted, as a matter of course, something as reliable and as certain as the Family itself, as the old estate or the many heirlooms that were passed on from generation to generation. All those belonging to a certain group in Russia knew approximately the amount of each other's fortunes, and, with rare exceptions,

few changes ever came about to affect those fortunes in any way. It seemed such a natural thing to hear people say: "When so and so marries he will probably be given so much a year by his parents," for everyone knew how large the estate of his parents was, how many country and town houses they possessed and what was their scale of living. Rarely, very rarely we would witness the crash of a great fortune due to some exceptional circumstances, but that would be such an unusual event that it would have the effect of a thunderbolt out of a clear sky and be talked about for a long time afterwards. The general rule was security and the expression, "Oh, he possesses an estate of gold!" was a familiar one. As a child I would often walk around our country place with my mother and she would say, "Look at that tree, it is two hundred years old and remembers Peter the Great"; or, "See that cave, it belongs to the days of Koudiar the Robber"; or, "This avenue was planted by your great grandfather, this tree by your father" and so on, until gradually I felt that everything that surrounded me was as old as the Family itself. And it was the same thing in every phase of our lives. The Church? "The gates of hell would never conquer it!" The Tzar? "God protect him to rule over us forever!" Our homes? Why they were like the nests of mighty eagles that no one could ever destroy! That is the way I was brought up, together with nearly all the girls of my class and my generation. When we grew up, we all realized that great changes were about to happen, but in the years of our childhood we only knew this sensation of strength and security. And then came the Revolution and

everything that we had been taught to look upon as immutable, unchangeable, was suddenly destroyed. Empire, Tzar, estates, homes, heirlooms — all were swept away, and those of us that were not killed were left poverty-stricken and helpless amid the ruins of the civilization that was Imperial Russia. Scattered all over the world, we did our best to adapt ourselves to a new life, but no one who has not been through what we have been through will ever realize what it meant to mould our lives differently, to forget the old and conform ourselves to the new.

My first year in America was very difficult, everything seemed so strange and I, a grown-up person, had the feeling of groping like a child in the dark, not knowing what to do and often making pitiful mistakes. I did not like it at first. I was bewildered, frightened, unhappy . . . then gradually, very gradually I began to see, to understand, and with the power of understanding came my first feeling of liking for the New World. In some ways it seemed pathetically childish and I liked its childishness, in other ways it appeared old, though in a different way than my country did, and I liked that too. I had often heard of the proverbial "melting pot" that takes people of all nationalities from all over the world and after a mysterious process of its own transforms the children of those people, the second generation, into Americans, while their parents still remain what they were: Italians, Germans, Swedes. Suddenly I realized that the melting pot had got hold of me, not a member of the second generation, but a newcomer, and was slowly putting me through its process of transformation, teaching me to feel like an American, to

think like an American and to act like one. And as I understood what was happening a feeling of great peace came over me — the first I had ever known since I had left my own country. And it was then that I realized that though I would never forget the past, never as long as I lived, still, mercifully, this new life in this new country was gradually drawing me to itself and teaching me how to live again. Slowly, very slowly, this process of softening the memories of the past and of adapting me to another life continued, and I suppose in a way it will go on as long as I live, but its climax came at the time when I married an American and suddenly felt that I was an exile and a stranger no longer, but that I had finally come home. Like Job, who had once lost everything, I was given everything new again; husband, home, country and even a car, instead of the Biblical oxen and camels. And, as I look around my new country and at my new countrymen and women, I, with my experience of two lives, often wonder if they realize what their great civilization has given them or whether they take it for granted too, as we used to? The average American woman has so much in her life; a good home, a car, security, comfort and an amazing range of mechanical contrivances which provide her with time to remain attractive when in any other country she would grow prematurely old. She has the leisure to enjoy life, to read, to cultivate her mind, to develop her talents, to play games — if she wishes. And all this has been provided for her so bountifully and with hardly any effort on her part.

Eight years ago I arrived in America without one cent of the Russian patrimony that in the old days I thought

would be mine, and as soon as I landed the New World welcomed me and gave me the opportunity of working, thus enabling me to take part in American life with all that it has to offer. Poor as I was those first years, still I earned sufficient to be well fed, decently clad, warm and comfortably housed in one of these amazingly efficient diminutive apartments (really nothing but one room) that can only be found in the United States. The kitchenette tucked away in a cupboard was like a toy and a source of constant amusement to me with all its electric contrivances, beginning with the little white range and ending with the toaster. And there was the "Murphy Bed" that disappeared into a closet for the day and came out at night, filling the whole "apartment" with its bulk; it amused me vastly though I always treated it with great respect, fearing that some night it might suddenly double up and disappear into its closet taking me along with it!

After the terrific, hopeless, desperate poverty I had been through in Russia and Europe after the Revolution, poverty in America was a comparatively pleasant experience. Perhaps I appreciate more than my new countrywomen do, all that America has given me, for it still seems strange and unreal to me when I look back to the fearful days and nights of the Revolution or still further back to the days of my childhood and youth. Like a child's fairy tale followed by a nightmare those memories of my former life come back to me as I sit by my American fireside, hoping that there can be no further changes, that this security is real and will last forever.

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* These are paintings made by a Russian artist during the first years of the Revolution, and brought out of Russia by Dr. Herschel Walker.

Foreword

INTO the bleakness of Soviet Russia in 1921 went the American Relief Administration, formed by Mr. Hoover, to answer a call for help from an extraordinary Government, unable to cope with a drought and an economic condition which had brought about an inevitable famine. The world knew of the withering war, the revolution, the cruelty of the Red Terror, the expropriation of property, and the aftermath of misery, typhus, hunger and starvation; it was the opportunity for this organization to be the instrument of a people given to great altruistic aims. Filled with the desire for great adventure, and inspired with the hope of assisting in work of definite value for humanity, we found ourselves surrounded with difficulties, dangers and suspicions, when it was necessary to co-operate for famine work, and disregard the ever-present policies.

Petrograd, in appearance, was a deserted city, with empty streets, the paving gone, holes and ruts unmended, and piles of refuse left where thrown, for months; a few street cars and occasional battered cabs; stores closed and windows boarded; dilapidated buildings, with the doors and woodwork torn out for fuel and the ground floors used as public toilets. One saw a few hunted people in drab clothes, worn and shapeless shoes often mended with

carpet, with cadaverous faces, bony hands, all sickly and famished, most of them carrying sacks containing things to barter for a few provisions. One met gangs of bourgeois non-workers as they were being taken to the streets as enforced labour for street-cleaning or snow-shovelling; and one saw here and there, the unforgettable gentle face of one of the intelligentsia among these ragged and lifeless people. But it was that strange appearance of their eyes, the look of fear, of tragedy, of despair, as though the spirit were dulled and all hope lost, which made such a piercing impression.

The American Government had given millions of dollars in foods and supplies to alleviate the situation. To handle and arrange distribution it was necessary to establish offices, warehouses and kitchens, with directors, managers, clerks, secretaries, stenographers, and workers, to run the machinery of caring for approximately one hundred thousand. It was somewhat chaotic for us at first, hampered by the suspicions of officials, while we, on our side, were more than a little suspicious of their methods. The office of the American Relief Administration was the background for so much tragedy and misery, the setting for so many dramas of endurance and of pain, that sometimes we wondered if there was any way in which those days could be made real to the outsiders, as they were profoundly real to us, who lived through them.

Early in the work a suggestion came from the outside to look for Irina, Countess Keller, and, if she were found, to extend to her any assistance we could at that time. Any movement made was observed by the spies of the Checka

(G.P.U. or Secret Service) and reported; not against the Americans for they were not in danger, but against those to whom we spoke, for it showed their contact with foreign influence and a chance for counter-revolutionary work. But Professor Golder, of the department of History of Leland Stanford University, started on the quest. Only after several disappointments, and by help that came through devious channels, was she finally found in the most tragic surroundings.

Vividly comes back the memory of a severely cold, blowy day, and the appearance of a drab and forlorn figure, with worn and frayed galoshes, tied around the instep and ankle with rag strings, and the cracks filled with snow. A shapeless brown black coat without identity, which left no hint of whether it was intended for a man or woman, enveloped her and a coarse woolen shawl covered her head. The face was startling in aspect. The large dark eyes were staring and watery and the rest of the face was puffy, bloated, of a pale lemon pallor and waxy texture, with thickened colourless lips, all without expression. The hands were swollen from water in the tissues, with the skin tightened at the joints and wrists; the finger-tips blue from sugillation of the blood, and the surface rough and cracked from chilblains.

One might have thought her a well-fed woman fainting from pain, but it was quickly evident that here was a form of starvation very near the end — the form in which pneumonia starts in water-logged lungs on account of congestion, poor circulation and lowered vitality.

Perhaps there were a great many things mentioned

during the conversation. Polite greetings, the weather, the office, the buildings, the city, the outside world, and what it was now like, but only to be remembered was "Food, a little food."

"But can you not find work, perhaps as clerk in an office?"

"No, one must belong to the Union."

"Why not belong to the Union?"

"Only proletarians are placed on the lists for work."

"Can you not sell your jewelry?"

"It is all gone."

"Or your clothes?"

"These are all I have left and it is cold."

"Why not do sewing?"

"There are none to sew for."

"Or even begging perhaps?"

"I want to but no one has extra bread to give."

Would it be possible to give her some of our food, and on a white table-cloth, in a dining-room? If so she must take one of the street cars in which people were crowded like sardines, hanging out of the doors and on to the rear, running only seldom on the main lines, and some days not at all if the power was cut off. Then a long walk of a mile, to be received at the door under another name, guarded conversation the entire time, for the maid reported the names of all callers and their actions to the secret police.

Most appealing to all hungry and starving is the fat content of the food; sweet things can hardly be swallowed, and the taste for them must be gradually cultivated again;

so as a soup, with plenty of grease, and bread with butter is the most satisfying, that was given her. Immediately after dinner she was driven away in a motor, zigzagging along deserted streets to avoid ruts and holes, deposited on a corner at a great distance from her sleeping place, so that the chauffeur would not even know the neighbourhood, and anyone following would be shaken off by using a circuitous path.

It is impossible to convey in words the extreme difficulty for foreigners to secure, or even help in the effort to obtain, from the Soviet Government a passport for a Russian, and the permission to leave the country. To even start to explain the devious paths to be traversed would encroach upon the story to follow. When it was finally secured for her, the resultant answer was:

"I cannot believe there is anything to live for. Death is so easy anyway. It is better to have the end here, in the place I have loved." . . . The weeks, months and years of hunger, cold, misery, terror, and mental torture had dulled the outlook, and the spirit, which had looked forward to a changed future, was too weak to grasp it when the door leading to Spring in the outside world was about to be opened.

Under forceful persuasion she accepted the arrangement to leave Petrograd for Reval.

With no extra clothing, no luggage, none of the little personal belongings which a woman holds dear, and only a small bag of food to last one day, she was ready to go. She would be stripped of everything of any value at the border. But there must be money to purchase a ticket

through Esthonia, food for a few days until the passage to London could be arranged and then the wherewithal for that passage. Fifty dollars might cover it.

In Petrograd at that time when the need for help was so appalling this sum was not easily donated to any one person, and especially with the knowledge that it would be used outside of Russia. But, after all the trouble taken to acquire the papers, and authority for departure, from the Soviets, we ought not to weaken when we were faced with the necessity of giving this amount of money.

We did not know how difficult it would be when she stepped over the Soviet border into the outside world, that world which we had pictured in such warm glowing terms but which might prove indifferent and cold towards her. We often wondered what happened to her when she found herself alone in strange surroundings with only that sum of fifty dollars, so large when given, but small, oh so small, with which to find subsistence in an alien country.

Her few remaining possessions could not cross the border where the patrols and customs officials searched to the skin for any hidden valuables or incriminating papers. A few little personal trinkets and articles, family photographs, little snuff boxes or vinaigrettes, and, most important of all, a few books, containing a diary, must in some way reach the owner. Professor Golder, soon to leave Russia, would carry them to her in London. We were keenly interested in the fate of the diary, for we were told it had included the years of the revolution and we not only desired, but had asked and planned for it to have a place in the Hoover War Library at Stanford University.

The document would be of great value in that unique and historically important collection of papers and publications relating to the thought and actions of the people of Europe during and after the World War. Several times she was hopefully asked to make the translations for the Archives of the Collection.

Now, at last, not only is the request to be fulfilled, but the public is to be given the chance to read the intimate daily record of the life of the street and of the home, as well as a record of pain and endurance during those bitter days. What she saw happening to her friends, what she heard everywhere, and what she felt in her mind and heart has been detailed in her diary. As all the material things of the world were gradually taken from her, we read her thoughts as they were written down. These impressions giving the atmosphere of that crucial time are valuable for an historian of the future. In a poignant way her soul has been bared, and the intimate pleasantries and sadnesses in the life of one member of the family of the old "General" are recorded.

Descended from the aristocratic princely families of Paskevitch, Sherbatov, Galitzine, her mother was the Princess Mary Lobanov of Rostov, and her father General Wladimir Skariatine. Before the war she was married to Count Alexander Keller. She is now the wife of Victor Franklin Blakeslee, Lieutenant of the United States Navy retired.

After Irina, the Countess Keller, had been placed on a Petrograd-Reval train for the outside world, years passed, and in memory she became one of those many faces that

moved through the office of the A. R. A., haunting in their poignant sadness, for they belonged to a class of people which was to be exterminated to make the world "safer for the new civilization." These people, who stood for the ideals that some of us hold dear, were not wanted by the group in power.

And then, suddenly, she crossed my path again, changed — reincarnated rather.

Living in America, happily married, much sought after, with many friends, in a real home, and in surroundings of peace — a glowing, radiant, lovely, still young woman; full of vitality and with that peculiarly Russian beauty which seems to laugh, sparkle and sing, over and above a rich and sad accompaniment of memories that can never be erased.

It is an honour highly esteemed, to have been asked to write this foreword to her diary, which is a true and vivid picture of a period seen through the eyes and apprehension of a fine and noble spirit.

HERSCHEL C. WALKER

Trove,
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania.

Childhood

MY earliest recollections are as intangible as smoke-shadows, and the very first one that stands out definitely in my mind belongs to the time when I am three or four years old. I see myself so clearly, dressed in a little white frock, with red sash, red shoes and red corals to match, sitting on a footstool near my grandmother's *chaise-longue*, holding her hand and listening to her voice softly murmuring over and over again:

“What a love of a child — What a love!”

I distinctly remember how pleased I was and how, when my English nurse came into the room to take me home, I cried gleefully:

“Nana, I’m a love of a child — a love, grandmamma says so!”

And then my feeling of acute annoyance at having Nana say respectfully:

“Yes, Princess,” to grandmother and then in an undertone to me —

“Don’beridulous,” while she tied my bonnet ribbons with a jerk, in the way she always did when displeased. Though she loved me dearly in her own way still she did not approve of “spoiling” children and often said “Don’beridulous” in order to counteract the effect of any demoralising words. “Don’beridulous” was a very

familiar expression in my nursery, though for years I thought it was one word.

The next thing I remember is driving through the streets of St. Petersburg in a closed landau in which I used to be taken for drives regularly every afternoon with my nurse. I have a Scotch plaid velvet coat on, trimmed with fur that tickles my neck, and the usual poke-bonnet, beneath which my ears feel cramped and ache. I am tired of sitting still so long and am standing by the open window blowing kisses to the passers-by. Some answer — others do not, but when they don't, I feel hurt. Suddenly a sledge draws up alongside of the landau and a lady, young, rosy and laughing throws me a bunch of violets as she cries in English:

“For you, you crack-baby!”

I am delighted, but Nana pulls me back from the window, closes it and then grumbles all the way home about “the impidence of some people.”

I ask her what “impidence” means, also “crack” but she answers sharply:

“Don’beridiculous,” and then I know that she won’t explain either word. So I sit quietly and wonder. When we get back home I hear her tell my mother indignantly the story of the rosy lady with the violets. Again she uses the word “impidence” — but my mother laughs, lifts me off the floor, hugs me tight and says:

“I like that: crack-baby. It suits her very well.”

Triumphantly I peep over my mother’s shoulder at Nana, expecting to see her frown, but she is laughing too, and suddenly I feel very happy.

Then a baby bear comes into my life. He is a little cub that my father brings home to my brother after shooting the mother bear, at a hunt in the great Briansky forests. I love that baby bear that we call "Mischa," and cuddle him and play with him by the hour. I am not so very much taller than he is, when he gets up on his hind legs and we stand side by side in the front of the long mirror in the ball-room — but still I feel quite proud that I *am* the taller of the two. Then one day he is taken away from us to the zoo and I am heartbroken. Nothing can console me — not even the arrival of a beautiful mechanical bear, that uses an eye-glass and sings a tune every time he's wound up. I hate that bear and try my hardest to break him with the result that Nana puts me in the corner!

About that time I develop a passion for umbrellas and parasols that for some unknown reason I call "drunnafalks." My playroom is full of them, all given to me at my special request, and yet when asked what I'd like as a present I promptly reply: "A drunnafalk." Why I invented that word, no one could find out, nor could its origin ever be traced — though Nana used to say that it really meant: "Run away home the rain is falling." Perhaps she was right and "drunnafalk" was the abbreviation of all those words! Once someone seriously told me that if I'd plant an umbrella in the ground a lot of little ones would grow up and again I remember the feverish excitement with which I planted one in the garden and watered it and watched anxiously for its babies to shoot up.

Then follows the tea-pot craze, when I suddenly became as wild over them as I had been over umbrellas and

that year no one dared give me anything else. Expensive tea-pots and cheap ones, big ones and little ones, all prices, all sizes and colours — I had the most unique collection in my playroom, that could only compare to my absurd collection of “drunna-falks.” For years afterwards I kept many of those tea-pots and if the Revolution had not destroyed my home I’d probably have them to this day.

I was about four or five years old when my eldest sister Mary became engaged and a strange young man by the name of Baron Nicholas Wrangel (which sounded very funny to me) appeared in the family circle, calling himself my brother to my great annoyance and disgust.

“He isn’t my brother at all and I shan’t kiss him,” I’d cry indignantly and Nana would promptly march me back to the nursery, giving me little shakes and saying “Don’beridiculous” as she’d shoo me along in front of her down the long dark corridor.

Apparently she did not understand that my small world was most satisfactorily complete with all the familiar people in it that I was accustomed to have around me ever since I could remember and whom I loved with various degrees of affection that I classified as “like and double like — love and double love,” so that I had no room for strangers, none at all. That world of mine was such a definite place too, that unconsciously I had divided it into two major parts: (1) the home, meaning the rooms, the furniture and all the smaller things, such as my toys, my nurse’s knickknacks, my mother’s gold and silver scent bottles, enamelled watches, bejewelled snuff boxes, etc., which were strewn all over the tables in her drawing-

room and that I might look at but never touch — and (2) the people in that home!

First among them naturally came Nana, who slept with me, washed me, dressed me, fed me, grumbled at me, punished me, sometimes (though very rarely) caressed me, and loved me, as I instinctively knew, with a boundless, devoted, faithful love — that never changed from the day of my birth until the day of her death. Consequently I adored her, and her occasional trips back home to England were the most devastating sorrows of my early childhood. Grand-daughter of a lodge-keeper of one of the Kings of England (I forget which, but he must have reigned in the latter part of the eighteenth century, as Nana herself was nearly seventy years old in the days I speak of, meaning the nineties) — she came in her youth to Russia in the capacity of childrens' nurse and became a member of our family at the time of my eldest sister's birth. I purposely use the words "member of our family" as she certainly was all of that during the thirty-six years that she lived with us. Not only I, but the entire family, adored her, for there never was a more loyal, straightforward and devoted soul, than our darling old Nana!

Next in my affections came the family doctor, Joseph Adamovitch Kroukovitch, who had brought me into this world and lived with us permanently too. An idealist and the kindest, gentlest man in the world, he had given up a brilliant career in Petersburg in order to share the life of our family and also to care for the peasants in our country place "Troitskoe." Day after day, for nearly thirty years, he would drive every morning to the village

dispensary (organized by my parents) and then go around the countryside, treating all the sick and never accepting a cent from them. It was he who interested me early in life in medicine, and it certainly is due to his influence that I took up medical studies later on. One of the greatest, finest souls that I have ever had the privilege of knowing was my beloved old "Doca," as I called him, and all my memories connected with him are the loveliest of my childhood!

My third great love was Fräulein Schell, our German governess, who also lived with us for years and years and who devoted a great deal of her time to playing with me and inventing the most entrancing games with paper dolls. "Schellie" I called her, and though I could not compare her to Nana and Doca — still I loved her very dearly too.

Of course I loved my parents, but in a totally different way. Whereas Nana, Doca and Schellie were part of my everyday life, my Mother and Father were more like visitors from another mysterious, glorified world. My Mother, beautiful as a dream, always dressed in soft, lovely clothes, deliciously perfumed with violets, wearing furs and jewels that fascinated me, seemed to me like a princess out of a story-book. I'd worship her from afar and hardly ever dare touch her. Though she often came to my nursery and played with me and petted me a great deal, still she was always to me, in those early days of my childhood, a glamorous being that would come from an unknown wonderful world, where people always dressed in silks and velvets, furs and jewels — and smelled sweetly of violets. I used to picture her seated next to the Lord

DON³BERIDICULOUS



MY MOTHER

at heavenly dinner parties, eating off golden plates, and talking to Him quite freely, while shining angels fluttered around and served them.

My feelings for my Father were mixed. Of course I thought I loved him, for I had been taught, early in life, to answer the question: "Whom do you love best?" by saying dutifully: "Papa, Mamma, Mary, Olga and Miki," meaning all the immediate members of my family. But I feared him a great deal more. First of all, due to the fact that he was stone deaf, he used always to speak in a very loud voice, and that terrified me beyond description as I thought that he was angry and either quarrelling with someone or else scolding, when really he was not doing anything of the kind (though he had a very quick temper and would quite often lose it). Then he had a bristly moustache that pricked me whenever he kissed me, and also a way of teasing me that I did not like and that often made me cry. It was sufficient for him to shout: "Baby, baby!" reprovingly — and I'd burst into bitter tears, to everyone's disgust. Later on in life I grew to understand him and we were the best of friends, but in the days of my childhood I confess that he used to be a source of terror.

My eldest sister Mary is a member of my family that I have never known very well — probably because she was fourteen years old when I was born, married when I was four and lived far away from us, only occasionally arriving with her tribe of children to visit us in the country. Being only five or six years older than her eldest daughter, I really was closer to my nieces than I was to my sister, who was too much of a "grown up" to be in any way of

great interest to me. But she was always kind and affectionate, never teased me and on the whole is a pleasant though rather vague figure in my kaleidoscope of childish memories.

My second sister Olga was quite different. Nine years older than I — clever, amusing, witty, quick-tempered — *she* used to tease me to the point of frenzy. Then suddenly she'd stop teasing and play with me by the hour, inventing the most exciting games. Consequently my feelings for her were very mixed, sometimes bordering on adoration when she condescended to play with me, while at other times I hated her for tormenting me.

My only brother Michel, or Miki as we called him, came next and though he was younger than Olga he "paired off" with her, followed her lead in everything, obeyed her implicitly and could not call his soul his own when she was around. Consequently if she teased me, he'd tease too, and if she played with me, he'd play too, arousing in me the same feelings for him as I had for her, though he was by far the kinder of the two and I really liked him best. When Olga was not there he'd become frankly my playmate and (despite the fact that he was five years older than I), we'd have grand games together. But the minute she reappeared he would turn his back on me and forsake me entirely, to my great mortification and sorrow. So on the whole I was happiest of all with my beloved trio, "Nana, Doca and Schellie," and never knew anything but perfect contentment, when left alone with them!

Other figures peopled my small world too; my under-

nurses, first Fanny, then Frossia, though I never specially cared for either, and old Julia, my Mother's personal maid, who had been with her since her marriage, and was devoted to her and all the children, though she openly confessed that I, being the baby of the family, was her special favourite. "Peetouschok" was her pet name for me, while I called her "Julkinson" and loved her dearly and considered it a great treat to be invited before my bedtime to her room, where invariably a little lampada burned in front of the great silver Icon of the Virgin, and rows of gaily coloured china eggs, reminiscent of many Eastertides, hung beneath the Icon in the "holy" corner of the room. She enjoyed particularly talking about religious subjects, invariably mispronouncing the word and saying "regilious" and, teaching me gravely to repeat it after her. We had such lovely times together! She would give me a cup of weak tea with caramels instead of sugar and tell me stories of the Holy Land and Jerusalem that she had read about or heard about from the many pilgrims that constantly called on her. And as I'd sit on her lap listening to her long-drawn-out tales, told in a peculiar singsong way and watch the dim flickering light of the little red lampada — I'd gradually get drowsier and drowsier and finally fall asleep in her arms. I loved those visits, but Nana never let me go there often, saying that the room was too hot, the tea too strong, and the oily smell of the lampada unhealthy. However that may be, "Julkinson" in her lace cap and stately black silk dress, invariably adorned with a heavy gold brooch, locket and chain of mid-Victorian design, sitting in her big armchair

beneath the silver Icon of the Virgin in the soft, mysterious and flickering light of the lampada, is one of the most vivid recollections of my babyhood.

Another outstanding figure was that of Miki's tutor — Nicolai Alexeivitch Maximovitch whom everyone called the Professor and who was a remarkable man with a most brilliant mind and extremely caustic disposition. While I was small I rarely ever came in contact with him, but when I grew older and began studying seriously, he became my chief instructor and a powerful influence all through my girlhood until my marriage. Undoubtedly he was the man who taught me to *think* properly and to analyse my thoughts.

Then comes Mr. Troitsky the ballet master and my recollection of taking an active part in my sister's dancing-class. How clearly I see that scene — the ballet master, tall and thin with long grey whiskers, claps his hands and cries: "one two three" and off the children go, all abreast, while I follow alone in the rear. Suddenly the master claps his hands again. The children stop. He says something to them, then to the accompanist, then turns to me and, gravely bowing in stately fashion, takes my hand and leads me into the middle of the room. I can see myself clearly in the long mirror in which I used to gaze standing side by side with the bear — now I am standing next to this tall, tall man, a tiny little figure in white, with the usual red corals, red sash and red shoes. "One two three" he cries and off we go, dashing down the room to the strains of a gallant mazurka. The red shoes twinkle, the red sash waves behind me, the curls bob up and down,

as we fly around the room. One turn, two turns, three — suddenly he twirls me around in the grand finale and lifting me high up in the air kisses the top of my head. “You’ll be a great little dancer some day,” he cries, and I am ready to burst with pride!

Still other figures emerge from the shadows of the past. Old Grau, the German butler, succeeded by Pankraty, with the bouncing tread of a dancing master; and Pavel, one of the servants whom I specially admired because he knew how to handle our old parrot “Popka” and kissed him on his treacherous beak, scratched his feathers and taught him new words besides those that the old bird had learned in the days when he belonged to my grandparents.

He really was a remarkable old bird, quite a phenomenon in his way! Old as the hills (no one knew his age, but he had been in the family for so long that he had become a tradition) he used to announce carriages, meals and visitors in the voices of servants long dead and gone, or else chuckle in the way someone in a past generation had evidently chuckled, or murmur to himself mysterious words and sentences. Sometimes he would carry on endless conversations in a low confidential undertone, appropriately changing his voice every time he impersonated someone different and one could clearly make out whether he was representing two or three or four persons. His favourite conversation however was carried on between a man with a rather hoarse voice and a squeaky woman — she doing most of the talking, while he from time to time would mutter to himself angrily.

But besides speaking in the voices of people long dead and buried, he used to imitate all of us and would call out our names in my Mother's voice so perfectly that often we would answer "Yes Mamma," and come running only to find that it was another one of Popka's tricks. He liked to sing too and once disgraced himself terribly by singing and shouting "Eins, zwei, drei, Hurrah" (an expression that a deceased German butler had taught him) during vespers that were being very impressively conducted in the great dining-room. Sometimes in Troitskoe when for some reason we could not go to Church, Church used to come to us. By that I mean that once in a while, on the eve of some important religious feast-day, vespers would be held at home, the priest, deacon and choir arriving *in corpore* for that purpose. On one of these days that I am speaking about, Popka had been forgotten and his cage left in a corner of the dining-room, while he himself at liberty, sat on the top of his cage, silently eyeing the unusual proceedings with an approving eye. Suddenly in the midst of the service when everyone was kneeling and praying devoutly he shouted gleefully, "Eins, zwei, drei, Hurrah" and then burst into a song. Now only one man knew how to handle Popka and that was Pavel, but Pavel happened to be away that evening and everyone was at a loss what to do. Frantic whispers of "Sh-sh, Popka, be quiet, go to sleep, good Popka, Popotchka dear" did not help at all, as he sat on his cage blissfully singing as loud as he possibly could and drowning the voices of the priest, deacon and choir. It was no use to try and silence him by waving anything at him, for instead of singing happily he would

then get angry, flap his wings and screech terrifically, and no one dared touch him, as he objected to that and had an unpleasant way of nipping rather hard with his formidable beak, whenever anyone but Pavel tried to get hold of him. So finally, in despair, the Clergy and congregation moved with as much dignity as they could muster to the adjoining Library, where vespers proceeded, while Popka, left alone in the dark dining-room, promptly fell asleep.

During the winter months, when all the family was away and only Nana, Doca, Schellie and I lived in Troitskoe, occupying one wing of the house, while the greater part of it was closed, Popka was transferred upstairs, and spent his winter in my playroom, his cage standing between the sofa and the old-fashioned organ. Regularly every winter for six years he would fall in love with my doll Esmeralda, and every afternoon at exactly the same hour get off his perch, climb down the leg of the table that his cage stood on, and, looking very wise, waddle across the room, catching his long nails in the carpet as he went along, to my doll's house in the opposite corner. Here he would sit on the back of a tiny gilt chair next to the bed in which Esmeralda always reclined when I was not playing with her. Until his bedtime he would perch there murmuring softly to her, or singing or saying to himself "Popka, dear Popka" over and over again. Then when it got dark he would yawn once or twice, stretch himself, flap his wings, and waddle back across the room to his cage. By a strange coincidence Pavel and Popka died the same day.

Then comes Carpitch, my father's (valet) appropriately

nicknamed "the Carp" on account of his name and also because he looked like a fish with his little washy eyes and mouth from ear to ear. Short, stocky and flat-footed, he was a funny figure, but possessed a dry sense of humour that carried him through all the difficulties of valeting his irate master. Descended from a long generation of serfs that had always belonged to my father's family — he was profoundly devoted to all of us and consequently used often to be entrusted with all kinds of important missions like the one of sitting at the children's bedsides whenever we were sick and needed extra watching. No one else was allowed that privilege, which Carpitch valued greatly, so his daughter told me in later years. How often, I remember, suddenly awakening and seeing his patient figure sitting upright on a chair at the foot of my bed, looking so much like a fish or a frog that I'd burst out laughing. "Sh, sh! go to sleep," he'd say over and over again and never another word could be got out of him, no matter how hard I tried. Then too, I remember so clearly the day when Olga was punished and sent to bed in broad daylight and Carpitch ordered to sit in her room so that she would not disobey and get up. How furious she was and how calm was the old "Carp" as he sat in a far-away corner of the room, saying over and over again respectfully, "No, you cannot get up!" It was he who, after the winter of my eldest sister's *début*, remarked sorrowfully when we were all returning for the summer to Troitskoe, "Too bad, we're bringing our *wares* back home again. However, with God's help, maybe we'll marry her off next year!"

Then there was Rodion the head coachman with his

great fan-shaped red beard; and young Nicholas, the children's coachman, and oh, so many others! As they now pass in slow procession before my mind's eye, how I wish I could bring every one of those lovable souls back to life just for a few minutes and thank them for having been part of my childhood and contributed so richly to the happy memories I have.

It was at the time of my sister Mary's engagement that I suddenly developed all kinds of alarming symptoms: pale cheeks, lack of appetite, regular little fevers and a nasty small cough. Doca looked grave and summoned a large consultation of all the best children's doctors. I remember one of those doctors, Professor Rauchfuss well, because when Nana brought me into the drawing-room, where all these strange grave men were assembled and I started to cry, he called me his "*poupotchka*" which I thought extremely funny, and gave me a little squeaking doll. With shaking fingers Nana undressed me, whispering "Don'beridiculous" because I didn't want all my clothes taken off — and then, standing stark naked on the great bear-skin rug I was given a thorough examination by all the grave men with cold fingers, who twisted my arms and legs and finally ordered me to "run" around the room, which I did with great alacrity, stopping in front of the long mirror to see "how I looked," much to Nana's indignation as she rushed up to me saying, "You're a naughty little girl and I'm ashamed of you!" That reprimand mortified me terribly and started me crying all over again so that she had to take me back to the nursery howl-

ing dismally. After that consultation it was decided that I should be taken abroad for at least two years and, as we were a united family, the next decision was that we would *all* go! So after many preparations that I remember quite well (as I personally packed my tiny bag, specially given to me for that journey) we said good-bye to the house on the Moika 16 and departed for Europe.

We went in true Russian style, without any thought of expense or economy, for in later years my Mother told me that instead of drawing out of the bank a certain amount of money to finance the journey of our tribe — a whole wood of silver birches in Troitskoe had been cut down and sold and the profits of the sale used entirely for the purpose of paying the expenses of our travels. And what expenses they must have been, when I think how numerous the family was.

First of all came the direct members, that is: my Mother, my Father, my two sisters, my brother and myself. Then Nana, Doca, Schellie, the Professor, Carpitch, Kolia the cook, a maid, and last but not least the black setter Ralph, a frightfully spoilt dog. It was a wonder that the dachshund "Djarie" and Popka the parrot were left at home. Otherwise the family was very much *au complet*. I don't remember whether Mary's betrothed went with us or whether he joined us later — but as they were married that year in Dresden, he might have been with us too.

My first impression of the journey was the feeling of satisfaction at seeing everybody I cared for sitting all together in the railroad car. It was such a comforting thought to know that they were all there, and would not

be able to wander away in the disconcerting fashion they used to at home, when I couldn't really keep track of anyone except Nana. I remember perfectly well running up and down the corridor of the car, peeping into all of the compartments and gleefully calling out to Nana, that "everybody's here!" Then I do not remember anything in particular until we arrived in a Berlin hotel, where I was much impressed with a cluster of electric flowers in the chandelier of my room — a thing of horror probably — though it seemed unusually beautiful to me and I cried bitterly because we could not take it along with us. Then I was fascinated with the fat proprietor who bowed a great deal and rubbed his hands and used mysterious words that sounded like "bitty" and "vissensy." He impressed me vastly and I solemnly repeated the strange words to myself, bowing and rubbing my hands and wondering what they meant. Then again, I was much interested and puzzled to hear Nana ask the chambermaid for "ice" water, when she wanted it hot — and actually got what she asked for. But when I asked her what she meant she answered loftily, "That's German, my dear" and I was none the wiser.

After that all is blurred again until our arrival at Münster am Stein near Kreuznach, where my impressions become extremely vivid once more. In Münster I was given hot salt baths and taken for walks around the Salines with Doca. But I soon got tired of those walks and he, pitying me, often took me to a railroad crossing instead, where I watched the trains go by. That crossing must have stamped itself indelibly on my memory, for

when twenty years later I passed through it in the train without knowing where I was, I recognized it instantly with a little shock of pain, as I saw the familiar scene flash by with only tall Doca and his little baby friend missing to make it complete. Trembling with excitement I rushed to the conductor crying, "Where are we, oh, where are we?" while he, looking at me in astonishment, answered briefly, "Why, Münster am Stein, of course." Frantically I thrust my head out of the window hoping to get one more glimpse of the place, but a bend in the road had hidden it from my sight and I fell back on my seat completely unnerved, for in that flash of recognition I realized that mysteriously the years had suddenly rolled away and for a few seconds I had been privileged to look back into my childhood, not only in memory, but in real life!

But Münster am Stein does not agree with me, I get thinner and paler and weaker than ever — and Doca declares that I should be taken away as soon as possible. So once more the great trunks are packed and we depart for France, for the Atlantic Seashore. We live in Royan and Pontillac, spending a year in both places, hiring entire villas everywhere we go, as the family is too numerous to live in any other way. I spend my days on the beach and all I can remember is the sea, that seems so high up to me, as fascinated I watch the great breakers; the sand, with the beautiful castles I make, the pools full of star-fishes and seaweed at low tide, and the numerous little French girls that I play with. I catch my first shrimp and it is served separately all by itself on a platter to my Mother at lunchtime, amid the howls of derision of my brother

and sister. I bury dead shrimps in the sand, in nice little graves with crosses of seaweed and sing my prayers over them until my Father sees my game and pronouncing it sacrilegious, sweeps away the graves with one poke of his foot. I eat *gaufres* on the beach. I go in bathing with a huge man called "Bodard" whose business it is to take all small children into the sea. He is dressed in a red oil-skin suit and I admire him so much that I ask my Mother if I can marry him. . . . I see a half-drowned man brought out of the sea all swollen and blue, and am so horrified that it makes me cry. . . . I watch the arrival of the Grand Fleet and cannot go to sleep that evening because the searchlights sweep over my bed. . . . I am taken to visit the great lighthouse, called, if I am not mistaken, "*Le phare de Cordouan*" and am given as a souvenir a miniature *phare* made of shells, that I keep for years! One day we all move from Royan to Pontailac in the tiny local steam trolley and occupy all the seats so that no other passengers can get in. Dismayed they stand on the platform, while the conductor sings out ironically: "No more room for anyone! The Russian family is all here!" That becomes a standing joke and I hear it for years afterwards.

That year my sister Mary must have been married in Dresden, but I don't remember anything about that event, as I am not taken to the wedding and am left behind with Nana, Doca and Schellie. Then we move to Cannes where we live at the Villa Faustina on the Croisette. On the terrace there is a marble statue of "Amour and Psyche" that my Mother decides is indecent and has covered with

newspapers. I often wonder why those papers are there, but as no one explains I keep wondering. When the Mistral blows I play behind a high wall in the garden, where violets grow in profusion. Sometimes I am taken for drives — sometimes for walks down the Croisette. I know the mountains are called “Alpes Maritimes” and the Islands, “Ste. Marguerite” and “St. Honorat.” By this time I speak French fluently and kindly help Nana out whenever French speech is necessary, as all she can say is: “Nong parley frongcay,” which useful phrase she produces on all occasions with great dignity and a certain glibness that I admire vastly. It sounds like one word — just like “Don’-beridiculous” and I practise hard to say “Nongparley-frongcay” the way she does, with a smile and a bow. One day I am dressed in an entirely new Parisian outfit, consisting of a pale blue cloak, trimmed with short, curly blue feathers and a picture hat, with only one long, long feather. I am very proud of my new clothes and beg Nana to take me onto the Croisette so that everyone can see what lovely things I have on. Being rather proud of me herself she consents and we sally forth. Seeing people smile kindly at me I bow right and left, saying gently, “Nongparley-frangcay” because it sounds so pretty when said in one breath, and mince along having a lovely time. All of a sudden I trip and fall face forward into a huge puddle, full of soft mud — the next instant I am pulled out of it howling pitifully, my beautiful new clothes all spoilt. *Never* shall I forget that episode and whenever I hear the saying “pride will have a fall” I always think of it!

My playmates in Cannes were Serge Obolensky, Baby

Torby, daughter of the Grand Duke Michel of Russia and his morganatic wife Countess Torby ("Baby Torby" is now Lady Zia Werner), and Princess Cecile of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, later the Crown Princess of Germany. I loved Cecile, she was so bright and gay and warm-hearted, though sometimes she used to hurt me greatly by saying disdainfully, "Poo, you're only a baby" and then would taunt me because I wasn't a royal princess and didn't wear silk stockings.

"You are a Skrrrratin — that's what you are!" she'd cry, dancing around me gleefully, rolling the *r*'s in my name (Skariatina) until it couldn't be recognized and giving me little pokes in the ribs to tickle me. . . . I can see her so clearly now, hopping around me in a kind of war dance, her eyes shining, her nostrils quivering, her hair bobbing up and down and her fingers jabbing at me. Then she'd stop teasing and hug me and play the loveliest games with me. She was my very first "best friend" and all my life I've kept a warm corner for her in my heart. Sometimes she'd make me frightfully jealous by whispering in German to a little Pourtales girl, while I'd pretend that I understood perfectly and didn't care, and would affect indifference and say "bitty" and "vissenzy" in a lofty detached way when they spoke to me again. But that happened rarely and on the whole I had grand times with her.

She used to come quite often to our Villa with her English nurse and loved playing with the paper dolls that Olga made for her. And speaking of those dolls, I must not forget to mention the great part that they played in

my life, both happy and unhappy. Happy because they were truly lovely (already then Olga was developing a real talent for drawing); unhappy, because the games that Olga played with me usually ended badly. One game for instance would drive me frantic and invariably end in tears. It was called the "Vanderbilt-Gould" game, and consisted of a long talk between two ladies, one of whom was Mrs. Vanderbilt, the other Mrs. Gould. Now Olga's doll being Mrs. Vanderbilt, and therefore the richer of the two, always had the best of everything, while poor Mrs. Gould, my doll, came always second. If Mrs. V. had diamonds, Mrs. G. had turquoises; if Mrs. V. ate off gold plates, Mrs. G. ate off silver ones . . . and so on, until I couldn't stand it any longer and for Mrs. Gould's sake would start a dismal howl. Whenever Nana heard Olga suggest kindly, "Let's play the V-G game" and I'd enthusiastically agree (hoping against hope, probably, that Mrs. Gould would get an even break some day) she'd shake her head gloomily and say: "Better not, no good ever comes of that game," and she was always right. Another thing that used to upset me those days was a mysterious language invented by Olga and Miki and that consisted of adding certain syllables to certain words. For instance "Era" (my nickname) would be pronounced "E-pe-ra-pa" and so on. Mostly they used that language in my presence, when speaking of me and though I knew that I was being talked about I could never get further than "E-pe-ra-pa" which made me frantic. As soon as I'd hear that ominous beginning I'd go wild—to their pretended amazement and when Nana would say, "Stop

teasing that child," they'd answer innocently: "Why what's the matter with her? We're just talking *our* language that's all! "

Towards the end of our year in Cannes I fell ill with scarlet fever and took such a long time convalescing that Doca declared the Riviera was no good for me anyhow.

"This life abroad is all nonsense," he said to my Mother one day. "The child will never get well and strong this way, and the only wise thing to do is to take her back to Russia and keep her in the country for several years. I promise you she'll get strong there! "

So again the trunks were packed and we returned to Russia.

Troitskoe

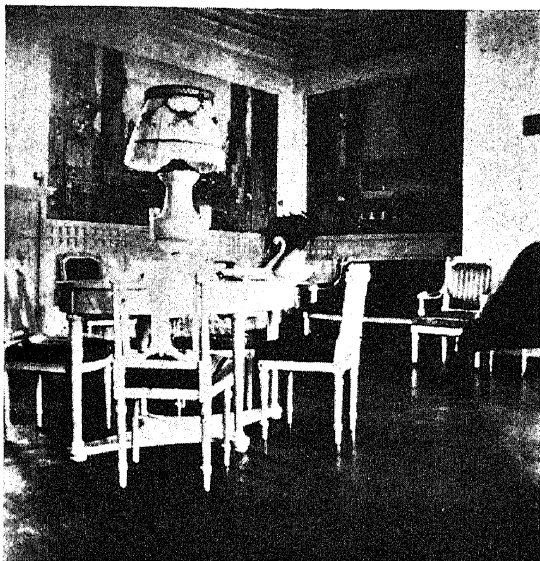
TROITSKOE was the name of our country place situated in the government of Orel and owned by my Father's family for exactly three hundred years. The founder of the family (so I discovered in the archives of our old library) was a Tartar Prince by the name of Skarata, who came with the Golden Horde that swept over Russia in the thirteenth century and settled in a central part of Russia (later known as the government of Orel) founding a powerful family of great landowners. His descendants, dropping the Tartar title of Prince and changing the name from Skarata to Skariatine, and marrying only Russian girls, became thoroughly Russian. However it is interesting to note that after all those centuries the Tartar type still occasionally crops up in the family, bringing with it the high cheek-bones, slightly slanting eyes and other various facial peculiarities that belong to the Mongolian race, all in a very modified form, of course, that often is most attractive. My Mother used laughingly to say that we all had the Tartar quick temper too, which she found at times extremely trying and very difficult to handle, as she herself was always so gentle and calm! In 1617 the land that probably old Skarata had originally settled on was legally deeded by the first Czar of the Romanov dynasty, Michael Feodorovitch Romanov,

to our ancestor Boris Mihailovitch Skariatine for "sitting firmly on the Moscow land," so the document read ("*za moskovskoe seedaynie*"). And again it is interesting to note the fact that that estate, named later "Troitskoe," was in the hands of my family for exactly three hundred years, having been donated in 1617 and then taken away by the Revolution in 1917. Before the great catastrophe we used often to talk about celebrating our family tercentenary and even planned to erect some kind of monument in the Park to commemorate the occasion. Alas for those plans — they went the way of most dreams!

Troitskoe was a beautiful place. The house had originally been built early in the nineteenth century, by our great-grandfather Iakov Feodorovitch Skariatine, a remarkable and highly cultured man. Exiled from the capital and ordered to spend his life in Troitskoe for political reasons concerned with the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Alexander I, he concentrated all his faculties in making his estate as beautiful as possible and, as I have said before, being a remarkable man, succeeded to perfection. The estate itself was then very great indeed, much larger than in the days of my father, due to the fact that great-grandfather had many sons and after his death the land was divided among them, though my grandfather being the eldest son received the largest and best part — Troitskoe itself. The house was an enormous two-storied stone Empire building, resembling the type of Colonial architecture and contained one hundred rooms, of which the ballroom and reception rooms were particularly beautiful, having been decorated by Italian artists specially im-

ported by my great-grandfather for that purpose. Flower gardens surrounded the house and a magnificent park lay beyond, its chief beauty consisting of great linden avenues of which the central one or "Big Avenue" was quite the longest and most beautiful that I have ever seen anywhere.

At the end of the great "Cross Avenue" cutting through the middle of the "Big Avenue" was a small square white stone building more like a summer house than anything else, though old-timers used to say that in great-grandfather's day it had been a Free Mason's Lodge (as the old gentleman was a Free Mason himself) and that subterranean passages connected it with the house. But whether that was really so I do not know, never having seen those passages myself. Another fine piece of architecture on the estate were the stables, an enormous long white stone building with a mighty façade, that stood directly opposite the old house, with an immense lawn between the two. Great-grandfather loved horses and had a splendid stud, that in his day was quite famous. I know he had an Englishman at the head of it, for I have seen with my own eyes his grave in our little village cemetery. Around the stables were various other buildings, housing the cows (of which there were a great number), the oxen, sheep and pigs; and the long carriage house, full of all kinds of vehicles such as landaus, victorias, "breaks," baskets, sledges; and the various workshops of the carpenters, mechanics, hostellers, and blacksmiths. The place was entirely self-supporting and self-sufficing — in every branch of life as only such products as sugar, caviar and similar things that could not possibly be produced at home,



A CORNER OF THE WHITE DRAWING-ROOM
IN TROITSKOE



TROITSKOE: THE ENTRANCE COLONNADE

were imported. Otherwise there was everything; heavy woollen fabrics, linen, lace (there were fifty lace-makers in the house), furniture, carpets, wood (everything was heated with wood) and all farm products such as meat, fowl, milk, butter, eggs, vegetables and fruit, including peaches and grapes. Great-grandfather also had a splendid collection of books, and his library, consisting of truly rare editions, was one of the best of his time. Loving all that was beautiful in life and knowing *how* to live, he surrounded himself with every conceivable luxury and comfort known in those days and the fame of Troitskoe spread far and wide.

At his death grandfather Wladimir Iakovlevitch inherited Troitskoe, but he did not spend much time there for two reasons; first he was governor of the State and had to live most of the time in Orel, and secondly, grandmother Maria Pavlovna (née Princess Galitzine) never cared for the country and preferred living in town. When grandfather died the estate passed on to my father and it was to Troitskoe that he brought my mother as a bride (née Princess Lobanov of Rostov). She often used to tell me the story of how, when she arrived at Troitskoe, she was at first deeply impressed with the beauty of the place and then aghast at its complete lack of modern comfort.

“A great ballroom, great drawing-rooms and reception rooms” she’d say, “and then the tiniest, pokiest bedrooms and, last but not least, only *one* bathroom for all the hundred rooms!”

Naturally she was horrified at such a state of affairs, and being very young and inexperienced, decided that the

house had to be remodelled right away. So then and there, without any architect, I believe, half of the house was torn down and then rebuilt on more modern lines, with large, airy bedrooms, plenty of bathrooms, adequate plumbing etc., becoming extremely comfortable and delightful to live in, but at the same time losing most of its beauty and value from the architectural point of view. Later on an architect came and corrected the many mistakes that had been made, adding balconies, colonnades and verandas, and making the house very lovely indeed, though it never was as beautiful as the old one.

My parents both loved Troitskoe, though from totally different angles, as my father was mostly interested in the agricultural side of the estate, in horses, dogs, hunting, riding, driving, conducting his remarkable Church choir and making photographs of everybody and everything; while my mother was absorbed in her numerous charities, her beautiful flower gardens, the Park, and the house. It was by no means an easy matter to keep such an establishment running smoothly, and yet she managed it perfectly. Of course she had a housekeeper and a butler and many servants all over the place but nevertheless she had to supervise everything, give orders and see that they were properly carried out. Besides having a fair-sized family with a large pedagogical faculty attached to it—there were the house guests to think about, who always filled the house in summer, and the many neighbour guests, who would frequently drop in to spend the entire day.

There were occasions such as the 15th of July, St. Wladimir's Day and my father's nameday, when guests

would arrive from all over the state, many of them staying overnight while others remained for days and even weeks. The program of such a day was very full and it was my mother who saw to it that everything should be perfect in every way: rooms properly distributed, everyone comfortably settled, the great dinner-party and the orchestral program rightly organized (an orchestra was imported for the occasion from Orel), theatricals and fireworks — all carried out to perfection. At a time like that she was truly wonderful, never excited, never ruffled and always beautiful. But it was during the years when my parents were young that life in Troitskoe was so gay. In my day it was much quieter for I was born when they were middle-aged and therefore no longer as active or as eager for pleasure. My mother was in her forties when I remember her first (that was when I was about four years old), my eldest sister eighteen, Olga about thirteen, and Miki nine. Thus I grew up surrounded by older people and with hardly any children to play with. Only in the first four years of my life did I have a little playmate, Nastinka Hendrikoff (Countess Anastasia Hendrikoff, later on lady-in-waiting to the Empress Alexandra, who followed her in exile and was killed by the Bolsheviks in 1918), with whom I resumed my friendship again when I was twelve years old, and who became one of the dearest friends I've ever had.

Then during the two years abroad there was Princess Cecile and a few little French girls whom I played with on the sands — but, after all, those were only occasional playmates, and at home I had no one to play with except

Nana, Doca and Schellie, or else my brother and sister when they condescended to play with me, which was not often. A childhood full of children is something I have missed entirely, and to this day I often watch wistfully a group of children playing together without any grown-ups, no matter how loving, to interfere with their games. I was never allowed to run, or skip or jump or skate or ride — for fear I might fall and hurt myself — and all I could do in the way of sports was drive a pair of fat old ponies and play croquet and tiddledewinks. Lack of companions of my own age and the constant association with older people made me an old-fashioned kind of a child, whose chief amusements consisted in reading a great deal and carrying on serious conversations much beyond my age, with my elders. Luckily for me they were all without exception clever, kindly, and well-educated (this last did not apply to Nana, though she was naturally extremely intelligent) and they all, loving me dearly, gave me the very best mentally they had to offer. To this day I often remember things they said when I was small and marvel at their knowledge and understanding of life.

It was to Troitskoe that I was brought directly from Cannes and remained there, without returning to St. Petersburg for six whole years. Without any doubt those were the very happiest years of my entire childhood and girlhood. I love to think of them. Though the whole family used to spend the summers in Troitskoe arriving in May and departing in October, the winters were spent alone with Nana, Doca and Schellie, who deliberately sacrificed all pleasures of town life so as to be with the

little frail child, whom they adored, and who adored them in return. Life with them was perfect harmony — never have I known anything like it since — never a cross word, never any punishments, not even any arguments among them. The atmosphere they created around me was full of love, warmth and understanding. In it I soon began to blossom out like a plant in proper surroundings. My days were mapped out so that every hour was occupied and on the wall of my day-nursery, or playroom, hung a big white paper chart, describing my day from hour to hour. I slept with Nana in the large night-nursery, had breakfast in the little dining-room, and then went to my playroom where I spent most of the day, learning my lessons, and playing with my dolls. In the evenings I listened to Doca as he read aloud or gave me my first lessons in astronomy, when the skies were clear and the stars bright, as they always are in winter. Schellie gave me most of my lessons in those days, two hours in the mornings, followed by an hour's walk and a piano lesson afterwards, then after lunch, when we came back from our second walk, she'd read to me in French books of the "*Bibliothèque Rose*" while I sewed or peeped over her shoulder as she read. Teatime was always delightful and so cozy in the playroom with the red curtains drawn, the lamp shedding a warm glow in the centre of the table and Nana's old English china-ware gleaming on the cloth. And such good cakes we'd have, prepared by Schellie herself; sometimes the famous German "*sand kuchen*" that made one cough if one swallowed it too fast, sometimes plum cake as a compliment to Nana and sometimes my favourite jam-

puffs. Doca used always to come in for tea after a hard day's work among the sick in all the villages around Troitskoe, having left the house in the morning at eight o'clock, and he always had *his* favourite rusks, also prepared by Schellie. Nana presided at the samovar, pouring out the tea, while I drank hot milk out of a tall blue wedgewood glass with white figures dancing all around it.

After tea Julia Vassilievna, the village school-mistress would arrive in a sledge drawn by a white horse, and then for two hours I'd study with her — Russian history and arithmetic. She was a short, plump, even-tempered, kindly soul who often made me drowsy with her slow way of speaking and monotonous voice. But I used to admire greatly a small photograph that she wore at her neck as a brooch and wondered who the bewhiskered man was and whether I'd ever possess any jewelry as lovely! When Julia V. left we'd have supper and then would come the best time of all — when Doca would read aloud to us until my bedtime. One winter he read James Fenimore Cooper's stories and that year I became an Indian, dashing around in my mind on a horse called Taouka in hot pursuit of scalps. It was then too, that Miki, arriving with the whole family to spend Christmas in Troitskoe, invented our famous American-Mexican game, that consisted of singing at the top of our voices "kill all the American people here!" and "kill all the Mexican people here!" That's all there was to it and I strongly suspect that he invented it so as to keep me quiet when I begged him to play with me, for he'd sit in his room reading and only occasionally shout "kill all the American people he-e-re," while I'd



PIANO LESSON AT EIGHT YEARS OF AGE, WITH SCHELLIE
NEXT TO ME AND NANA IN THE BACKGROUND

answer delightedly from my room "kill all the Mexican people here!" Nana hated that "bloodthirsty" game, that she grumbled "no little lady" should play, and finally it stopped.

Christmas time was like a fairy tale to me for I was never allowed to trim the tree and would live in a fever of excitement until the evening when I saw it standing in the centre of the great dining-room ablaze with candle lights. About two months before Christmas I'd begin to prepare the dreadful handiworks that I solemnly presented to all the members of my family; sachets, pen-wipers, pin-cushions, slippers, etc., and under Schellie's supervision would work on them indefatigably while she read to me "*Les Petites Filles Modèles*." Two or three days before Christmas I'd get so excited I would not sleep nor eat, and to everybody's disgust would choke over my food at table and, unable to swallow it, put it back on to my plate.

"You dirty little thing," Olga and Miki would cry, while Nana would say defensively, "Don't pay any attention to her — it's only the excitement about Christmas!" . . . Then on Christmas morning my father would invariably announce with a sad face that we'd have no tree this year, while I, just as invariably, would burst into tears to Miki's great delight. "Water," he nicknamed me, because I wept so easily and "smackey" because I smacked my lips at table. Sometimes he put the two together and called me "Water-smackey," to Nana's great displeasure, though I rather liked my name.

At the Christmas tree I always had my own table laden

with presents, as everyone else had, and how clearly I remember every gift. For instance one year I got a lovely doll's house with four rooms entirely decorated by all my family who worked on it in the evenings for two weeks before Christmas, and a small clock of beautiful workmanship that had belonged to my grandmother; and a set for my desk, and a trousseau for my doll "Esmeralda"; and a ruby horseshoe brooch, and books — quantities of books — Miss Young's *Pillars of the House*, and L. T. Meade's *Children of Wilton Chase* and *Sunday* a magazine, and oh so many others. What happy Christmases those were! Never has any child had happier ones!

Then there'd be a tree for the village children and I'd help make tarlatan bags, pink for the girls and blue for the boys, to put their presents in. But I was never allowed to see the school tree for fear of contagion, as my mother was always terrified that I'd catch some germ!

Olga in those days fascinated me. First of all she had grown up, made her debut, and consequently wore, to my idea, the loveliest clothes I had ever seen. Then too, she sang romantic songs that I had never heard before and blushed a great deal when certain names were mentioned. All that fascinated me and I pictured her, living in a world of balls and parties that never ended — lasting from early morning until bedtime — *if* she ever went to bed at all, which I seriously doubted. Then too, instead of teasing me, she'd tell me stories or else recite poetry; my favourites being "The May Queen" and "The Passing of the Old Year." Her sitting-room in Troitskoe had changed as much as she had, and was full of photographs of pretty

girls whom I had never seen before — and of books and knick-knacks that I'd handle with great respect, whenever I was admitted to her room, which was not very often. She used to draw and paint a great deal in those days and even made my portrait, to my delight; also the loveliest paper dolls. But Schellie was the expert at playing paper dolls, and we had a great game, she being the Kaiser and I, Queen Wilhelmina. Doca played at dolls badly. When I'd wheedle him into a game all he'd do would be to sing at intervals: "Kiki, Mimi, Fifi," "Mimi, Kiki, Fifi — Fifi, Kiki, Mimi" and look awfully drowsy while I'd plead frantically, "Oh, Doca, *can't* they say anything else?" But no, they couldn't, and then I'd let him go. But Schellie could keep her Kaiser talking interestingly for an hour and was the best paper-doll player the world ever saw.

In winter I was taken sometimes for sleigh rides though very rarely, and once put on skis. But I fell head foremost into the deep snow, with my legs waving wildly in the air, nearly choked and never would ski again. However I was allowed to slide down an artificially made ice-hill with an enormous old soldier, my father's orderly during the Turkish war, called Streltzof, to take care of me. He and I would slide down the hill together and then trudge up it, he pulling the sled and grumbling as he went. In a way that was a lot of fun, but as there were no other children to slide down the hill with me I'd soon tire of it. Sometimes the steward's children, Olga and Volodia, would be invited to join me, but very rarely as Nana and Schellie didn't care for them particularly and said they had "bad

manners," which from the point of view of an English nurse and a German governess was probably true.

Though above everything I loved my winters with Nana, Doca and Schellie, with the excitement of the family arriving for Christmas, still I enjoyed the summer-time too. The long hot days, when Nana and I would wander through the Park, trying to find a cool spot, the drives in the low pony shay, called the "basket" because it was woven out of stout reeds and looked like a basket on wheels, the naps in the hammock, the meals out on the verandah. But I hated going to bed while it was still daylight, and the gentle swish-swish of the heavy dark blue linen window curtains and the Church bell in the distance tolling out the hours and the singing of the nightingale beneath my window often made me cry. And as I'd lie sobbing there Nana would come up and ask me, "Why, what's the matter Dickie-birdie?" and I'd answer gasping: "Oh, Nana — I think I am dead." There was something in that combination of sounds; the swishing of the curtain, the tolling of the bell and the melancholy song of the nightingale that gave me the strange sensation of being no longer little Era tucked up in her bed in the night nursery — but a spirit flying through space like that picture of the angel with widespread wings soaring above the earth, that hung on the wall opposite my bed. Sometimes it would take Nana quite a long while to recall me to earth again, and hearing me repeat sobbingly, "I'm dead, Nana, I'm dead!" she would give me such a good shake and utter such a "Don'beridiculous" that finally I'd come to life again.

I must have been about ten years old when I fell off the big swing and smashed both knee caps. I suffered a lot and was kept in bed for a long while. Then later on I was given crutches and learned to hobble around rapidly, but even when they were no longer necessary the pain in the knees would often recur, and until I was fourteen (when I was completely cured by the famous Saki mud-baths) from time to time I suffered agonies. It was then that Nana, Doca and Schellie nursed me as in the days when I was a baby and read to me and played with me by the hour — poor Doca even offering to play “Kiki, Mimi, Fifi!”

Sometimes in Spring and regularly every Autumn we'd go to visit my great uncle and great aunt Paskevitch in the Castle of Homel, situated in the government of Mohilev. The castle considered one of the finest pieces of architecture in Russia was built by the famous Italian architect Rastrelli in the eighteenth century and belonged to my great grandfather, Prince Ivan Feodorovitch Paskevitch, Prince of Warsaw, Count of Erivan, Viceroy of Poland and Field Marshal of Russia. Grandmother (my mother's mother) Princess Anastasia Ivanovna Lobanov of Rostov (who used to call me “a love of a child,” and whom I dimly remember) was great-grandfather Paskevitch's daughter and a sister of great-uncle Prince Theodore, whom we used to visit in Homel. His wife, Princess Irina Ivanovna, née Countess Worontzoff-Dashkoff, besides being my great aunt by marriage was also my godmother and it was in her honour that I was named Irina.

The Castle was magnificent. It consisted of a great square central part, flanked on either side with long glass galleries that led one to the Tower, the other to the Chapel. Passing through the main doors one came to the entrance hall, devoid of furniture, save for some heavy high-backed chairs and two enormous marble vases in niches on either side of the hall. Straight ahead, facing the entrance, wide glass doors led into the square ballroom of immense proportions, containing tall white corinthian columns, that supported the four galleries which formed the upper part of the great room. A huge chandelier was suspended from the domed ceiling, while four smaller chandeliers hung in the four recesses formed by the galleries overhead. Around the walls stood *banquettes* of white and gold and damask, the only furniture in the ballroom. Passing straight through one came to the terrace that overlooked the flower garden, the river Soge and the plains and woods in the distance. On either side of the ballroom were two vast rooms; to the left the White drawing-room with beautifully stuccoed walls, enormous crystal candelabras nearly as tall as the ceiling and great vases of the Imperial Porcelain Factory — all gifts of the Emperor Nicholas I to my great-grandfather. Here stood large, white and gold stiff sofas, tables and chairs in strictly symmetrical order, very imposing and very formal. To the right the Red drawing-room, used as a living-room and quite comfortable with its soft red damask furniture, led into the dining-room, also of vast dimensions. Here hung two life-size portraits of my great-grandparents, while the other walls were literally covered with a collec-

tion of trays and platters made out of silver coins that the Field Marshal had brought back from his wars. Another door of the Red drawing-room opened on to the hot-house gallery that led to the Chapel, while a corresponding door in the White drawing-room took one through the other gallery to the Tower. This Tower had been added to the Castle by great-grandfather and spoilt it considerably as it was of an entirely different type of architecture and probably made the great architect Rastrelli turn over and over in his grave when it was built. Great uncle's rooms were in the Tower, also the library and the museum, while his wife's apartments were next to the White drawing-room. Upstairs around the galleries of the ball-room were the numerous guest rooms, named according to their colour schemes.

I rather liked those visits to Homel, not for the sake of seeing my great uncle, for he was a stiff, uncompromising, severe old gentleman, though in his heart of hearts extremely kind and generous, nor my aunt who did not care for children and didn't understand them; never having had any of her own — but because life there was interesting and amusing in many ways. My mother was always very happy there; Olga was a special favourite of uncle and aunt, and Nana and Julia, who always accompanied us, enjoyed tremendously the pomp and ceremony of the Castle routine.

On Thursdays and Sundays the grounds used to be thrown open to the public (the small town of Homel coming up close to the Castle walls) and an orchestra would play from two to four. Nana and I loved those

"musical" afternoons though everybody else in the Castle hated them, and would keep away in the private gardens until the gates were once more closed to the public. But I used to sit next to the Kiosque when the orchestra played, and watch spellbound every movement the men made. Sometimes one musician or even two would get tired of playing and stop in the middle of a piece to exchange remarks and crack a few jokes with friends whom they'd recognize in the crowd, while the others would go on doggedly playing all by themselves often minus the most important instruments in an orchestra. Fascinated, I would watch the drummer sometimes finish the piece all by himself with a remarkable flourish of drumsticks or else the flutist pipe out a thin finale while all his companions were resting. But there was one thing that they all played together enthusiastically and that was the march composed in honour of great-grandfather Paskevitch, and with which the program always politely began and ended. I loved to hear the first one that proclaimed so bravely the beginning of the musicale, and hated the last one for then I knew that the great treat was over until next Thursday or Sunday. I used to count the days from one concert to the other and Thursdays and Sundays were always red-letter days!

Another treat was going down to the river Soge (an affluent of the Dnieper) that bordered the castle grounds on one side, and watching the steamers go by. Passenger boats, freight boats, barges, tugs, mostly bound for Kiev — I soon knew all their names by heart and even now can reel them off in the glib way I used to as a little girl. Nana

enjoyed that too and together we'd sit in the summer house overlooking the river and count the boats as they passed. Another pleasure — one that was stupendous and magnificent in every way, and used to make me wild from excitement — was the “gala Performance” given in the Castle theatre, most of the actors being members of my family. Aunt Paskevitch usually played the principal part, being an excellent actress, with a really fine talent; then my aunt, Princess Lize Kourakine always had an important role, also my sister Olga, who mostly played the part of an ingénue. I never missed one single rehearsal, always sitting with Nana in the front row, and by the night of the final performance would know every word so perfectly that I might easily have taken the place of the prompter. Oh those “gala” nights, how marvellous they seemed to me, like a page out of a gorgeous fairy tale! The Castle all ablaze with lights, the flunkies dressed in their festive ceremonial attire, the great tables spread out in the immense dining-room, glittering with silver and crystal, the crowds thronging the reception rooms — and last but not least the performance itself with Nana and myself in a corner of the front row breathlessly watching every move the actors made and whispering their lines ahead of time. After that I'd hide from my mother so as not to be sent off to bed until I knew that everything was really finished. Once even I was given the part of a mushroom girl and carried three little baskets onto the stage, calling out in a shrill voice, “This basket costs five kopeks, this one ten and this one fifteen.” That was all I had to say, but, oh the agony of excitement when the

time came for me to sally forth with those three baskets.

Another treat was the trip to the great paper factory of "Dobrush" owned by my uncle, and of which he was extremely proud. A special train would take us to the Dobrush station and from there we'd go in the tiny train that belonged to the factory itself, with cars like toys, all marked with the Paskevitch crest (my great-grandfather had a veritable passion for that crest and stuck it in every conceivable place in the castle — much to the delight of the younger irreverent generation!). At the factory we were met by the superintendent, Mr. Stulginsky, and shown all over the place until it was time for dinner, at which Mrs. Stulginsky, a kindly, hospitable woman presided. She was famous for the delicious *marzepans* she made, and before going to Dobrush there was always a great deal of excited discussion about how the famous *marzepans* would look and taste.

Usually there were other members of the family in Homel, while we were there, my uncle and aunt Balascheff, my uncle and aunt Kourakine, numerous cousins and also members of aunt Paskevitch's own family, the Worontzoffs. But sometimes we were all alone and I did not care for that particularly, for then I'd be given a good deal of attention and questioned as to the depth of my knowledge in various branches of study, and told to sit up straight and corrected at table for my manners. Once uncle Paskevitch "picked" on me for a whole evening because I was wearing a tiny diamond brooch in the shape of a heart that my mother had just given me — and told

that in *his* day little girls never wore diamonds. So of course I wept and I clearly remember that my mother was most upset too, for he reprimanded her severely for giving me "jewels."

Then Olga would discover my "Diary" that I wrote every day and bring it downstairs and read it aloud to the assembled family. I remember so clearly how they all roared when she came to the place where I described my First Confession — at the age of seven in Troitskoe — when I told the astounded Priest that I did not care for castor-oil! So on the whole, I much preferred it when the Castle was crowded and everyone forgot about my manners and diaries. I usually had an upset stomach in Homel, because they had a French chef, Monsieur Etienne, who served very rich and complicated food so that one never knew exactly what one was eating. To remedy that Nana bought milk and eggs and biscuits on the side and fed me in our rooms in order that I should not eat too much of "that poisonous stuff downstairs," as she expressed herself.

But best of all I enjoyed wandering around the Castle by myself studying the pictures, all glorifying great-grandfather and showing him dressed in a resplendent uniform gallantly riding a white horse at the head of his troops in a raging battle (it's a wonder he wasn't killed if he really did that, but he wasn't, he died a natural death in his bed at an advanced age!) and I admired the great vases of the Imperial Porcelain Factory, also decorated with pictures of great-grandfather's military deeds (these vases being gifts of the Emperor Nicholas I, and made

at his special command at the Imperial factory as a compliment to great-grandfather). And I liked the two long glass galleries full of hot-house plants and marble statues; the Chapel at the end of one gallery, the Tower at the end of the other; the grotto beneath the castle, decorated by Italian mosaic workers; the museum in the tower, full of great-grandfather's war trophies; the silk tents of the Shah of Persia which he had captured, and through which, I must admit to my shame, I enjoyed poking my finger so as to make nice little holes! . . . and Thorwaldsen's great bronze equestrian statue of Joseph Poniatovsky, that stood on the terrace and that great-grandfather had brought from Poland, while someone had tactlessly erected *his* statue in Warsaw after he had conquered the town. How the Poles wanted their Poniatovsky back! They often sent delegations to Homel wistfully asking whether he could not be exchanged for great-grandfather's statue that they naturally detested (to such an extent that I was told they used to spit at it whenever they passed it. During the war, when I was in Warsaw I went purposely to see whether they spat at great-grandfather, and actually saw some people do it! Also I was told that during the Revolution he was blown up, but whether that's true or not I don't know). And I loved the great flower beds and the fountains and the swans. . . . Oh yes . . . Homel was a wonderful place and though I preferred Troitskoe, still I loved it dearly.

Besides Homel, in the autumns we used sometimes to go to the Crimea, just my mother, Nana, Julia and I, to visit Prince and Princess Leon Galitzine whom absurdly

I called uncle and aunt *Ma*, because that was *her* pet name. They lived in a place called the "New World" situated on the southern coast of the Crimea, between Yalta and Theodosia, and owned the tiny bay and the semi-circle of great granite mountains that protected them from the northern winds. On the slope of those mountains stood the Four Towers in which uncle and aunt *Ma* lived; one of the Towers containing the bedrooms, the other the living-rooms and so forth. Curiously enough, though they were very wealthy people, they had never built a regular house for themselves and lived all their lives in those Towers, which though extremely picturesque (being reproductions of Genoese towers) were not too comfortable as they weren't connected in any way except outwardly by four crenellated walls that had no passages in them. Consequently when it rained, so as not to get wet, one had to take an umbrella to go from one Tower to another. Besides the Towers there were several small one-storied houses, with two or three rooms in them that were used as drawing-rooms, dining-rooms and extra guest rooms. Of course I enjoyed tremendously running from house to house, but older people did not specially care for that and would grumble about Leon Galitzine's eccentricity at not having a regular house.

But the rare beauty of the "New World" was undeniable. The semicircle of tall granite mountains half covered with Juniper trees, the vast vineyards sloping gently from the foot of the mountains towards the sea; the four Towers standing picturesquely in the midst of the vineyards; the little white houses with red roofs, dotted here

and there around the Towers — and last but not least the Black Sea itself, sometimes deserving its name, as it would roar and foam in a storm, at other times as limpid and blue as the Mediterranean. Then, to add to the fascination of the place there were the great caverns full of stalactites and stalagmites, and lovely rock crystals strewn in profusion over the mountainsides, so that one could pick up one's own jewels as one walked; and ravines in which fossils were constantly being found, as well as relics of Genoese culture. One day, wandering around with Nana, I found at the bottom of a ravine twenty-four catapult bullets of all sizes, beginning with great big ones like bombs and ending with tiny ones no larger than a nut. Uncle Ma was delighted at my find and had the bullets transported to his Tower and then later, donated them to the Museum of Theodosia, where they are probably safely housed to this day. He had a Museum of his own in one of the little houses, that was full of priceless things: china, pictures, etc. — though they were all packed in great boxes that had to be unpacked every time he wanted to show anyone his treasures.

And again people used to say, "Why on earth doesn't he build a decent museum where he can exhibit his collections properly? "

But for some reason he was of a different opinion and to the end of his life lived in his Four Towers and kept his treasures hidden in ordinary packing boxes. A great big man, with a splendid physique and a mane of hair like a lion (he was most appropriately named "Leon! "), he reminded one of a mixture of Tolstoy (externally) and

Monte Cristo (inwardly). Intelligent, generous, open-hearted, eccentric — he was a powerful figure in every way, much admired, much criticized, much talked about, for his was an unusual personality. We got on splendidly together ever since the days when I was a baby and he used to toss me high up in the air, until the time when I saw him last, while travelling through Italy shortly before his death and the World War. He even gave my mother and me a strip of land in the "New World," hoping that some day we'd build a small house and live there, which we had fully intended doing, when first the war and then the Revolution destroyed all our plans forever.

The vineyards in the "New World" were famous all over Russia and though the Galitzine wines were not considered particularly good, still one could buy them everywhere and Leon Galitzine himself was considered one of our greatest wine-makers. His cellars for some reason (it was in this that he reminded one of Monte Cristo) were mostly built *beneath the sea* and made him more famous than anything else. Whenever we were there large numbers of Tartars were always working on the construction of some new "under-sea" wine cellar, and their turbans and snow-white linen robes would make the "New World" appear all the more strange and exotic. Princess Galitzine, Aunt Ma, a tiny little hunchbacked woman with a mind and heart that made one forget her infirmity, was one of my mother's most intimate friends and the chief reason why we went to the "New World" so often. Her step-daughter Nadia (uncle Ma's daughter by a previous

marriage) was her father's right hand and knew more about wine-making than anyone else on the place. In every possible way she'd help her father, sometimes spending day after day in the dark, damp cellars, slaving away as hard as any ordinary hired worker. I think she never married because she loved both her father and her work so absolutely that she couldn't think of anyone or anything else.

Whenever we came to the "New World" we were always given the same little white house, detached from all the others and rather high up on the mountain-side. There Nana and I lived our own life, going down to the Towers only for meals. From the balcony of the little house we could see the entire bay and in the distance the ships passing on the horizon, while at our feet lay the Four Towers surrounded by vineyards in patterns resembling a huge carpet. At night-time, when the sky was "throbbing and panting with stars" and all the rest of the world obliterated by darkness, I'd creep out of bed and gaze at the glittering dome overhead, thrilled to the depths of my small being, as I'd watch and watch, spell-bound, until Nana, discovering with a start that I was missing, would chase me back to bed, uttering a "Don'-beridiculous" so loud that it would make the welkin ring!

When I was twelve years old my life changed radically. First of all my happy winters in Troitskoe with Nana, Doca and Schellie were brought to an end, as my mother decided that I had reached the age when I needed more

instruction and would have to spend the winters in Petersburg with the rest of the family. Then, I was given a separate bedroom from Nana, being told that I was a big girl now and needed a room of my own, and from then on Nana gradually slipped out of my life, though of course she stayed with us till the end of her days. Then Schellie had to leave us and return to Germany where she had a sick sister that needed her care. Then Doca decided that as the last baby in the family was growing up and did not need his constant attention any longer — he'd retire too and live on his estate "Beshenkovitch," in the government of Vitebsk. Thus, all of a sudden I found myself all alone, heartbroken at being separated from the three people that I loved best, and soon transferred into the capable hands of the Professor, my French governess, and numerous teachers. They were all kind people and treated me extremely well, but after the hot-house atmosphere of adoration with which Nana, Doca and Schellie had surrounded me, the world seemed terribly cold and my heart empty. My only consolation was the bull-terrier puppy that I had been given that same year, whom everyone called "Gyp," but whom I named "Djohanson-Reske-Nahanson-Pickansee-Ahanson-Frrr," which meant a lot in "dog language," but that everybody else found absurd. My governess even declared to my mother that she would not go walking down the streets of Petersburg with me if I persisted in calling out loudly that nonsensical name. So we compromised and from then on I called him simply "Djohanson" in public. He was a wonderful little fellow, full of adoration for me that I reciprocated, loving

him more than anybody else during the seven years of his short life.

In Petersburg we lived on the Fontanka 25, a lovely two-storied house built in the days when Petersburg was still young. Though my parents owned a fine house on the Fourstatskaia 11, for some reason they did not find it convenient to live there and preferred renting year after year the entire second floor of Fontanka 25. The ground floor was occupied first by the Baron Buxhoeveden's family and then by Count de Möy, the Bavarian Ambassador. As I have said before, the old house was lovely and my mother's great drawing-room one of the most perfect rooms I've ever known. My father's reception-room with the marvellous Empire furniture given by Napoleon to an ancestor of ours, Count Roumiantzeff, was extremely beautiful too, though it was colder, more formal and did not possess the charm of my mother's drawing-room. One of the pleasantest rooms in the house was my brother's study, a long comfortable room with several fine pieces of furniture, many etchings, a good library and a number of handsome antiques, such as clocks, silver and bronze ink-stands, candlesticks, paperweights, etc., that he loved to collect. It was there that we all liked to sit in the evenings for he had two large turkish divans that were most comfortable, especially the smaller one next to the white porcelain Dutch stove, where I'd sit in my favourite corner, with "Djohanson" by my side. I had a nice room too with my brother's bedroom on one side and my governess's on the other, but slept always with my mother in her perfectly enormous bedroom, my plain little iron bedstead

standing next to her big mahogany one, which was upholstered in red silk and covered with a lovely pale green spread. Over her bed hung a great mahogany and bronze frame that contained many beautiful Icons of silver and gold that I loved. She always kept the room very cold at night-time and in the morning I'd often find a thin crust of ice above the water in the basin of the great white marble washing stand.

Masha, my former nursery maid, whom I always called "Ivanovitch" would wake me up at seven o'clock and regularly every morning I'd plead for "ten minutes longer." I hated getting up in that cold room in the dark (I couldn't turn on the electric lights, for fear of waking my mother) and would hop out of bed and scamper like a rabbit to my own room down the corridor, where I'd find a wood fire blazing in the Dutch stove and everything warm and cozy. Breakfast in the dining-room with the Professor and Mademoiselle Jacobi would be at seven-thirty, and at eight my lessons began. The two first hours always belonged to the Professor and were the most strenuous of the entire day, as he was extremely severe, and demanded absolute perfection in everything that I had prepared for him. He never sat down during lesson-time and would pace the room to and fro, as I sat in front of my little wooden desk, shivering from excitement and fright. His voice, always loud and doctoral, would be heard all down the corridor and would make poor Mademoiselle Jacobi so nervous, thinking that he was scolding me all the time, that she would leave her room and stay out of it until the lessons were finished. But he was not

scolding me — he rarely did that, using biting sarcasm instead — and it was only his way of speaking very loudly, in a harsh, dry voice, that made others think that he was angry. When the lessons were over I would always have to change my clothes, as my chemise was invariably wet through and through from the cold perspiration that would cover my entire body — and again, in front of the warm Dutch stove, I'd dress once more and get ready for my piano lesson. To the very last year of my studies the Professor's lessons always affected me that way, but, strangely enough I liked them, for he made me *think* and would know how to bring out the very best I could give mentally. "Think!" he'd cry. "Think! before you answer. I don't want you to learn things like a parrot and not know what you're talking about! I want you to think and understand and analyse your thoughts. Whatever thoughts you have — bring them out in complete, concise form — don't allow anything to be hazy in your mind. And learn to separate the essentials from the non-essentials and to think like a *man*, not like a woman." He rarely praised me but when he did (and he was very just) I'd be so happy and proud I wouldn't know what to do! Other lessons after his seemed tame, and I'd find myself applying *his* methods of critical thought to my other teachers, with the result that I'd often view them with a disapproving eye. Little by little the Professor and I became the very best of friends and though I never got over the habit of shivering and perspiring during his lessons, his mental companionship became one of the most important factors of my girlhood. In his heart of hearts, he liked me very

much, was interested and amused by the workings of my brain and admired me for what must have been the absolutely sexless quality of my mind during my years of adolescence. I still possess a letter in which, in later years after my marriage, he tells me all this frankly.

Besides my lessons with him, in literature, history, mathematics, etc., I had piano lessons every day with young Mme. Meshing and once a week with her mother Frau Grossman, professor of the Conservatory of Music; drawing lessons with Alexandra Petrovna Schneider, our one and only woman Academician, who exhibited her famous paintings of flowers at the Paris "Salon"; lessons in art with her sister Varvara Petrovna Schneider; French lessons with Mlle. Jacobi; German with Mlle. Meyer; lessons in religion with a priest (at one time the famous Father Gregory Petroff, renowned for his eloquence and liberal ideas) and dancing lessons with Mme. Lessnikova, daughter of our old ballet master Mr. Troitsky. My day was full every hour from the time I got up until the time I went to bed (always at eight-thirty until I was sixteen) and one lesson succeeded the other with the precision of a perfect machine. Only after lunch did I go out for a long walk with Mlle. Jacobi and Djohanson, always going down the Fontanka, through the Summer Gardens, down the famous "Quais" to the Winter Palace and back again. We both enjoyed those walks, for often we met our friends, I, the little girls of my own age and she, the governesses that accompanied them.

On Sundays I used to drive with my mother to the Winter Palace Church, and then after lunch be driven

again with my governess to one of the houses of my little friends, where we'd play together from two until six. No boys were ever present at those parties and I never saw one until I was much older. My friends were: Nastinka Hendrikoff (whom I have mentioned before); my cousin Zozy Balascheff; Sonia Koutouzoff; the three Hartong sisters, Mary, Olga and Vera; Olga Tolstoy, and others. We usually played hide and seek and "Cossacks and robbers" all over the house, until tea-time, while our governesses sat together and gossiped in low voices.

And so my life in Petersburg swung evenly along without any outstanding events to break the clock-like regularity of my days. "Once in a blue moon" I'd be taken in the afternoon to the opera, or the ballet or a concert, on my birthday perhaps or during the Christmas and Easter holidays, but those were such rare treats that I remember every single one distinctly. I was given a box then and allowed to invite any one of my little friends that I particularly wanted, which I did impartially, gravely remembering who came last year and consequently should not be asked this year. In Troitskoe during the summer months, my life was just as much mapped out as in town, with the only difference that for three months, instead of lessons, I used to read aloud for hours with the Professor, Mlle. Jacobi and my mother, in the garden, usually seated beneath two large palm trees that my father had imported once from Italy as a present to my mother, and that in summer were brought into the flower garden, though in winter they lived in a hothouse, specially built for them. It was always a sign of summer when the palms were

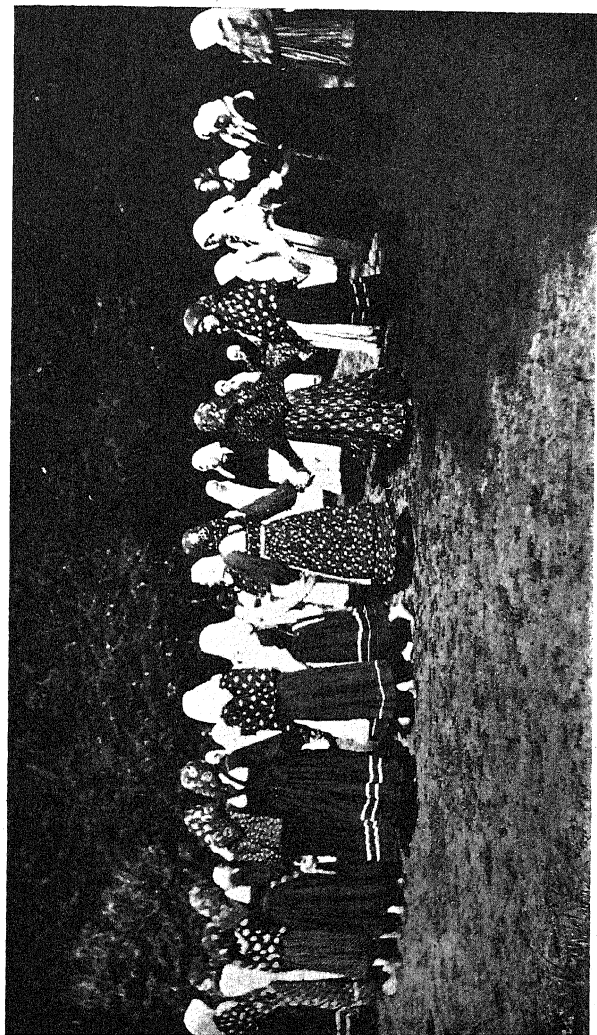
brought out and there was a lot of excitement and shouting among the gardeners while the trees were being settled into the deep holes specially dug out for them in the midst of flower beds.

“Beneath the palms” was a familiar summer expression and “beneath the silver birch” too, for there, under the shadow of that lovely tree planted by my father when he was a boy, we always had afternoon tea. Meals were numerous and heavy in Troitskoe and it is a wonder that we were not all terribly fat. Breakfast (in the dining-room for everyone except my mother and the house guests) was a very complete affair, where cereals, bacon and eggs, cream and milk, bread and butter, coffee and tea were plentifully served, according to individual tastes. At ten o’clock a “pick me up” in the form of a sandwich with a small glass of sherry was served, when desired, while at one o’clock came the great dinner, consisting of numerous and elaborate *hors d’oeuvres* (served at a separate table around which everyone stood, plate in hand) and five main courses, all very substantial from the heavy rich soups, *pirochkees*, fish, meat, vegetables, and salads, down to the ice creams and various desserts. That dinner usually lasted about an hour and a half, after which everybody, gasping, would either go up to their rooms to sleep, or else lounge in the hammocks and garden chairs until tea-time. At four o’clock Afanassy, one of the handy men about the house, would appear carrying a very long table on his back, which he’d place with a great rattle of boards always on to the same spot beneath the silver birch. Then would appear a procession of servants in white summer

clothes, bearing chairs and the various necessary tea paraphernalia, and the numerous cakes, tarts and goodies that invariably adorned the table until it groaned beneath the weight of so much food. Then the gong would be sounded followed by the appearance of sleepy looking inhabitants of Troitskoe still drowsy after their big dinner, though ready for their substantial tea. After tea everyone would become active, riding, driving, playing games or walking until supper that was served at 7 P.M. and was as elaborate a meal as dinner, minus the *hors d'oeuvres* and soup. Supper over, the older people would settle down to bridge, while the younger ones would wander around the garden or else play the piano and sing. At ten o'clock tea would be served with cakes and then on retiring, one would find in one's room a little "emergency supper" consisting of a glass of milk, a dish of fruit and a few biscuits!

For years I could not stand such heavy and numerous meals and used to be frequently ill, until at last I was left alone and allowed to eat as much as I needed and no more, thank goodness. The nightmare of my life was the constant urging to "eat more," when I was small and only Doca's decided interference saved me from that torture. On the whole it was only the men of the family that really ate a great deal, but my mother, sisters and the rest of the womenfolk did not eat much and (except my sister Mary) never grew fat; on the contrary my mother and Olga had lovely figures that they kept in perfect condition always.

One summer, when I was fourteen, my first cousins, Olga (now Countess Leutrum d'Ertingen) and May (now Princess Serge Cantacuzene) Okolicsanyi, arrived to



PEASANT GIRLS DANCING IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE AFTER THE HARVEST (TROITSKOE)

spend a month or two. They were the daughters of my mother's only sister, Princess Olga Lobanov, who had been married to a Hungarian diplomat, Sandor Okolicsanyi, and died the previous year. I was very much impressed with the arrival of two such beautiful girls, but at the same time extremely mortified because they considered me too young to merit much attention and "paired off" — Olga with my sister Olga (who was visiting in Troitskoe then) and May with my brother. Both pairs were about the same age and therefore most congenial. But though I was "left out" a good deal, still when they all condescended to include me in their circle I had a lot of fun, especially when they played charades or other games that I could play too. In a way their presence matured me and I began to be eager for a little fun with young people too. For the first time in my life the constant companionship of much older people appeared tiresome, and I would catch myself longing for the gaiety and activities of youth with a wistfulness and intensity that was almost painful. It was then that I became restless and dissatisfied and, according to my mother, "suddenly difficult to handle." But when the cousins left and my old routine was resumed once more, harnessing me to the hum-drum of everyday life, I soon became resigned to my fate of never having anyone young around me, and forgot the interlude. On and on swung my days in Troitskoe, always the same, without any changes, according to the usual program.

One hour every day, whether in winter or summer, belonged to me to do as I pleased, and it was then that I

wrote my diaries and the " sketches " that I began writing when I was seven years old. Sometimes, instead of sitting in the garden after supper I'd go upstairs and gaze at the stars through the big telescope that belonged to the house, but that I was allowed to keep in my room and use as much as I pleased. Often I would get out of bed at night and continue my astronomical studies that I loved so much, while everyone in the house was sleeping and I felt that the sky with all its magic worlds belonged to me. After a night like that it would be hard to get up at seven o'clock and I would be drowsy and listless all day. When I was quite small I wrote the great Camille Flammarion an absurd little " astronomical " letter and shall never forget the thrill I got when the great man actually answered me, kindly telling me what books to read and what maps to use for my " astronomical researches " as he gravely and politely put it. By the way his books *Les Terres du Ciel* and others helped me more than anything to stand the Revolution and in the days when life was raging and storming around me in a tempest of fury, I would read his peaceful works and find in them the strength I needed to " carry on." And so the days flowed evenly on until I was sixteen when suddenly my life changed — one might say almost overnight — and in the most radical way!

It began on my sixteenth birthday, when my hair was put up in a bun low down on my neck with a large black bow to keep it in place (a hairdresser came especially for that, so as to make the occasion as ceremonious as possible) and my skirts were considerably lengthened. I was given many presents, all of them unlike any I had ever re-

ceived before — that being also done with the intention of making the day as outstanding as possible. My mother gave me a gold bracelet, with a large ruby and diamond clasp in the shape of a horseshoe, a leather travelling bag fitted with numerous silver toilet articles, an astrakhan fur coat to replace the modest little rabbit-lined dark blue cloth jacket that I had been wearing up to that day, and a quantity of new clothes. My father gave me a grand piano; aunt Paskevitch — my godmother — my first silk dress and two small diamond combs for my hair; my sister Olga, a lovely Faberge pendant of two mecca-stone drops with little diamond love knots; my brother, a set of books; Mlle. Jacobi a real “Gallet” vase — a thing I had wanted for a long time; the Professor a beautiful edition of Pushkin’s poems; Nana a pillow, embroidered with her very own old shaky hands; Doca a lovely little work box, with a golden thimble and a number of gold and ivory sewing articles; a pink silk coverlet from Schellie in Germany, a blue satin dressing gown from Julkinson, and so on. A little drawing-room of my very own was arranged for me in Troitskoe, and last but not least, I was told that from now on I might sit up until nine o’clock every evening; that perhaps being one of the most important gifts on my birthday. That winter, however, everything went on as usual as far as my daily routine and studies were concerned and it was only in May that an event took place that changed my life completely.

My brother up to that time had rarely brought any of his friends home, and only two boys, his fellow students at school, had ever come to Troitskoe in summer, but as

they were still of the age when boys disdain little girls and I was too small and too busy to be interested in boys, their appearance in Troitskoe made no impression on me whatsoever. But, in that particular month of May, when I was sixteen and a half and the lilacs in Troitskoe unusually beautiful, my brother suddenly invited several of his friends, all of whom were the sons of my parents' old friends and Miki's comrades at the University where he was then studying. They were all as nice as could be, young, jolly, healthy — and I liked them tremendously. It was the first time in my life that I had the companionship of young men and though Mlle. Jacobi never left my side for one instant I played croquet with them, went walking, driving, boating, and in the evenings sat in the garden singing in chorus. Though, as I say, I liked them all, unconsciously I felt drawn towards one, whom I'll call just Petia, and though I did not realize it then, soon fell in love with him, with all the spontaneity and strength of first love. He too, was attracted to me, for often I'd catch him looking at me differently than did the others, who all treated me in much the same way as they would another boy, and his voice would change and take on soft, low intonations when speaking to me. "Auntie" he called me, for one day we had discovered that our families were in some way distantly connected and in such a fashion that I became his "aunt" several times removed. It always thrilled me to hear him call me that, and when, in the midst of a game of croquet he'd suddenly bend over me and looking into my eyes murmur, "Auntie dear" — a wave of happiness would sweep over me and I'd want to

shout and dance from sheer joy. And still I did not realize what was happening to me and it was only on the eve of his departure that I understood. We were all sitting after supper on the terrace near the house, singing, when suddenly, in the way such things do happen, the other four boys sprang up and began to wrestle on the lawn, Mlle. Jacobi was called away for a few minutes and Petia and I were left alone together, for the first and last time in our lives. For a minute we sat in silence staring at the young moon sailing over the tree-tops, while a nightingale sang softly in the great lilac bush that filled the warm spring air with the sweet fragrance of its flowers. Somewhere in the grass a cricket chirped, an owl hooted in the Park.

"Auntie, Auntie," murmured Petia softly, taking my hand. I began to tremble all over, my heart thumping furiously as a strange new dizzy sensation came over me. "Auntie," he continued softly, "you're such a dear little girl, such a dear. I've never known anyone like you *douschenka*. But you're so young yet, such a child! Do you think you could wait for me and when you grow up. . . ."

"*Venez, Era, il est temps de rentrer!*" Mlle. Jacobi's voice suddenly broke in from the terrace — "*Votre maman vous appelle.*"

As though there had been an earthquake and the whole world had tumbled to pieces around me I stood up, trembling from head to foot.

"*Eh bien, venez-vite, dépêchez-vous,*" she cried, while in the distance I heard my mother's voice calling, "Come here, baby dear, I want to speak to you."

And right then to make the catastrophe complete, Miki

rushed up, shouting, "What's the matter with you two, seen a ghost? You look thunderstruck or moonstruck, which is it?"

"It's the moon," I heard Petia answer, as with shaking knees I slowly turned away and entered the house. All through the night I cried and cried as though I knew that something beautiful had entered my life for a brief moment, only to go out of it forever, leaving a wound that would never heal — the wound that only first love had the power to inflict.

Next day I did not see Petia until dinner-time, just two hours before his departure for the station. It was then that Miki suddenly shouted, "I have an idea! Let's all go and see Petia off." And for the first time since the previous night I felt happy again.

"Yes, let's go," I cried, as Petia looked at me with the expression that made me always so happy, while my mother said kindly, "All right, children, go, with Mlle. Jacobi but don't get home too late!"

The minute dinner was over I rushed to my room to put on my hat, feverishly grabbing my coat and gloves out of my maid's hands as I flew downstairs. Suddenly as I entered the hall, I heard sounds that made me stop aghast — guests had just arrived, two Stahovitch girls, neighbours of ours, Liouba and Varia who had come especially to call on me! Once more the world was crashing all around me, I felt like screaming, running away, refusing to see my guests, hiding from them. . . . Why, oh why was God so cruel? But the strict training of years carried me through that crisis and no one seemed to notice anything

unusual in my behaviour, as I came up to the girls with outstretched hands saying, "How nice of you to call! "

Then as in a dream I remember saying good-bye to Petia, right there in the entrance hall in front of everybody, and hear him say as he held my hand for a second, "Don't forget, Auntie, don't forget," while Miki shouting, "Don't forget *what*, silly?" hurried him into the carriage.

In a few minutes it was all over and Petia had gone out of my life, while I, still as in a dream, found myself walking in the Park with the two girls on either side of me listening to their gay chatter and answering as best I could. Luckily Varia had just read *Dracula* and insisted on telling me the whole story, which helped me a lot, for then I did not have to speak.

That evening the coachman brought back a poem written by Petia at the station as he waited for the train. The poem was addressed to Miki, but when he read it aloud I knew it was for me — every word of it. The next day I asked Miki to give it me which he did, saying, "Why, Water-Smackey, you're not in love with him, are you?" while I ran out of the room without answering. I learned that poem by heart and put it away in a little rosewood box, together with a spray of lilac of the "nightingale's bush" and a tiny photograph of Petia.

That summer I pined away into a mid-Victorian decline and became so thin and pale and listless that my sister Olga, finding me in tears one day and worming out of me my poor little love story, persuaded my mother to

let me make my debut that autumn, exactly one year earlier than it had been intended. So after our usual visit to Homel, we arrived in Petersburg in the beginning of November, where immediately I was plunged into the exciting whirl of new dresses, new hats, new shoes, all being chosen, fitted and bought for the event of my debut. To begin with I was formally presented at Court, first to the Empress Alexandra, then to the Dowager Empress Marie and then to all the older Grand Duchesses. I don't know why all those dignified and ceremonious Court presentations seemed awfully funny to me, but they did and I had to exercise self-control not to burst out laughing while performing series of stately curtseys, answering gracious questions and bowing and backing out of the drawing-rooms. To my mother's dismay I did laugh outright once, when a very stout lady in front of us curtseyed low and as she did so her tight satin skirt, fastened with treacherous snappers, suddenly burst open with a loud "trrr," right in the middle of her seat. "Don't, baby, don't," I heard my mother murmur in an agonized whisper, as I shook with laughter, stuffing my handkerchief against my mouth, just at the very minute when the Empress came up to us. Graciously she smiled at me and asked me a question, that I answered as best I could choking with laughter.

"Your little girl seems very gay and happy," was all she kindly said about my disgraceful conduct as she smilingly turned to my mother and spoke to her for a few minutes before passing on to the other ladies in the Circle.

"You're a naughty little girl and I am very angry with you," my mother said when the Empress was out of hearing, but I couldn't stop laughing because the stout lady had realized what had happened to her, and was anxiously trying to fasten her snappers, with both hands, dropping her handkerchief and handbag and fan in the effort. All through the lunch that was served at the Palace I laughed and laughed, until my mother said severely she had never seen such behaviour at Court before, and would never bring me again! However that did not prevent her from presenting me to the other royal ladies, where on the whole I did not disgrace myself again except once, when an old Grand Duchess asked a girl how her dear father was, evidently forgetting that he had been dead for several years, while the girl too taken aback to think quickly, answered with a smile, "Thank you, your Highness — he is very well indeed." That was enough for me and though my mother turned a severe and warning eye on me I exploded in a burst of indecent laughter while the Grand Duchess raised her *lorgnon* and stared at me in cold disapproval.

For my coming-out ball, given by my aunt Balascheff, in her great house on the Morskoi, I was dressed in a little white silk frock with a wreath of white flowers in my hair and a corsage spray to match. My only jewels were a large diamond star pendant given me by my mother just before the ball and a moonstone and diamond ring, that aunt Kitty Balascheff had sent me also in honour of my "coming out." At that ball, I knew I would see Petia once more after a separation of nearly seven months, dur-

ing which I had not heard a word from him. I had been in a fever of excitement for weeks. When the great day finally came I could do nothing but watch the clock from the minute I woke up until it was time to dress for the ball; unable to eat or read or do anything except stare at that clock and think how interminably slowly it progressed. The dressing was like an enchanted rite; the warm perfumed bath, the drawing on of the very first pair of silk stockings that I had ever possessed, the finely embroidered chemise covered with valenciennes lace, and panties to match; the white satin corset, the white silk beribboned petticoat, the dancing slippers and the ball dress itself — all those things seemed part of the magic. When finally I emerged from the hands of my maid dressed and ready to go, my mother slipped on my neck the thin platinum chain bearing the great diamond star and then presented me with the moonstone ring sent by Aunt Kitty. Then a little swansdown cape was thrown over my shoulders while in the entrance hall the footman gravely held my new silk, fur-lined *shuba* that was to replace my old pink cloth, kangaroo pelisse.

Down the stairs we went through the hall into the carriage, where the fur rug was spread over our knees and a sweet scent of violets, my mother's usual perfume, filled the small space.

"Oh, this *is* Heaven," I thought as the footman sprang on to the box and the horses started briskly, bearing us to the wonderland of a girl's first ball. All the way down my mother repeated her instructions: to curtsy to all the older ladies, to be as polite and nice to everyone as I possibly

could, to say "thank you" to my partners after every dance, *not* to dance two dances in succession with the same man and not to sit out any dances or go into any other rooms than the ballroom. "Remember, you must always be perfectly natural, for goodness sake don't imitate any girls that simper and giggle and coquette, and if only you are your own self everything will be all right," she said.

When we arrived and my little white snow shoes and new silk *shuba* were taken off and we began to ascend the wide stairs I suddenly felt I could not go on.

"Let's go back, Muzzie," I whispered, pulling her sleeve and staring up at her with eyes full of terror. "Let's go home please, I feel sick." My knees were shaking, my hands clammy and my throat tight and funny as when I wanted to cry.

"Don't be ridiculous," murmured my mother, imitating Nana so perfectly that I burst out laughing and overcoming my stage fright, followed her up the stairs.

On the top landing Aunt Kitty was waiting to greet us, and then crossing the threshold of her first great reception room I entered the new world awaiting me and made my formal debut. After curtsying to every one of the older ladies in the room, as guest of honour I opened the ball with my married cousin Andrew, and was soon dancing my feet off. Then, in the midst of a waltz, as in a dream, I saw Petia enter the ballroom looking, oh so handsome as he stopped near the door, and watched attentively the dancers swing by. "Petia, Petia," I wanted to cry . . . but remembering my mother's instructions, did not utter a

sound, though involuntarily I kept my head turned towards him.

"Whom are you looking at? Petia X?" asked my partner, following the direction of my eyes. "Do you know him? He's a nice boy and he and Sophy X. will make a splendid pair. You've heard of course that they are engaged, though it has not yet been officially announced?"

"Yes," I heard my voice, as though a thousand miles off, answering, "yes, I know that and I think they'll make a splendid pair."

Suddenly the ballroom began to float uncertainly around me. I had a vision of millions of dancers whirling madly in a wild rondo, while the music crashed discordantly with a terrific volume of sound. The next minute I stumbled and would have fallen had not my partner caught me up in time, saying, "What's the matter, are you giddy?" "Yes, I am giddy, it's my first ball you know and I've never danced so much in all my life," I answered shakily as he led me to our chairs, where we sat for a while. Then, under the pretext that I had torn my dress that needed mending, I rushed upstairs to the third floor, where so often I had played with my cousin Zozy the thrilling game of "Cossacks and robbers"; and creeping behind a huge trunk cried and cried and cried. It was as though in a few minutes the whole world had changed, completely losing its beauty and all the happiness that youth expects to find in it. "Life is cruel, cruel," I sobbed desperately behind the trunk, swallowing clouds of dust as I crouched lower and lower until I lay on the floor, digging my fingers into the side of the trunk that was old

and mouldy and pliant. Then suddenly into the midst of my misery crept another feeling — that of pride. “What? are you going to show the whole world how you feel?” a voice seemed to whisper, “Shame on you, shame, shame, shame.” I stopped crying and sat up, wiping my eyes, then crawling out of my hiding place, shook the dust off my dress and straightened my hair. “I *won't* show the world, I won't, I shan't,” I declared aloud firmly, though I was still sobbing in the dry way children do after the worst is over. I remember perfectly how those dry sobs hurt my chest and then made me laugh a little because they would not stop.

“Era, Era, where are you?” I heard my cousin calling from downstairs, while I, mustering up all my courage, called back, “Here Zozy, I am here. I felt a little giddy and sick and thought I'd come up here where it's cool for a change.”

“You funny little thing,” she cried running up, then suddenly stopping exclaimed, “Why you look all mussed — what have you been doing, have you been crying? Does something hurt you?”

“Yes, I was hurt a little during the dance,” I replied, “but I'm all right now, let's go.” And down we went together to the dressing-room, where I washed my face and put on a fresh pair of white gloves (having brought an extra pair in my hand-bag) while the maid shook out the folds of my dress with deft fingers and rearranged my hair.

“Where *have* you been?” my mother asked anxiously as I came into the drawing-room next to the ballroom.

"Didn't I tell you not to wander off alone, and what's the matter with your eyes — have you been crying?"

"Well you see Muzzie," I answered, "I got giddy and sick dancing and went upstairs for a while to rest, and cried a little bit because I felt ill, but I'm all right now."

"Are you sure?" asked my mother still anxiously, putting her hand to my forehead to see if I had any fever. "Wouldn't you rather go home?"

"Oh, no, no!" I cried, "I'm all right now, I want to dance." And back to the ballroom I went, where my quadrille partner was awaiting me, wondering where I had disappeared to. Suddenly, as a waltz was being played once more, I saw Petia cross the room and stop in front of me, bowing ceremoniously as he asked me to dance. With flaming cheeks and shaking knees, though with my head well up in the air, I rose from my chair and the next instant was in his arms — dancing. How often during the summer I had dreamed of just such a dance, picturing my happiness and delight. How strange that my dream should have come true — but in such a different way. Had anyone told me that I'd be dancing in Petia's arms with my heart full of misery, I would have never believed it possible. But there it was — my dream come true and I, the unhappiest little girl in the world!

For a few minutes we danced in silence then, "Auntie," he murmured, "little Auntie — I'm so glad to see you!"

"And so am I," I answered softly, trying hard not to cry.

"You look so pretty in your grown-up dress," he con-

tinued, "prettier even than you did in Troitskoe. Did you think of me at all this summer, or did you soon forget?"

"I did not forget," I whispered, winking back the tears — "it is you . . ."

"I? What do you mean?" he asked. "I never forgot you, not even when I heard that you were to marry."

"I to marry?" I cried, and almost stopped dancing in my amazement. "Why I am not going to marry anyone! What are you talking about?"

"Oh, yes," he said, "maybe *you* don't know it, but it is all decided and you've been promised to X. . . . My mother told me so and she heard it from his aunt."

"No, no, no," I cried, really then stopping dancing, and stamping my foot, "I'm not 'promised,' someone has lied about that. I'm not engaged and I'm not going to marry anyone, not until I meet the right man," I finished defiantly. "But how about *you*, aren't you engaged?" I asked after a few minutes' silence.

"Yes, Auntie, I am," he answered gently. "Soon it will be announced."

"She is lovely and I wish you all the happiness in the world," I cried gaily, though bending my head low so as to hide that tiresome mist in my eyes. . . . After that we danced without saying another word until he led me back to my chair. The rest of the ball passed as in a dream, and when it was all over and we were sitting in our carriage, where it was so warm and smelled so sweet, I closed my eyes exhausted. In that one evening it seemed to me that I had suddenly grown much older and that

my first youth with its promises of magic happiness and fairy-story delights had fled forever.

"Are you cold? Are you tired? Do you feel all right? Did you have a nice time? Did anyone say anything *special* to you?" my mother queried anxiously, as we drove through the cold, bleak, deserted streets, while a sharp wind rattled one of the window panes and a fine snow flew past us in little flurries.

"Yes, Muzzie, I feel all right, and had a lovely time," I answered looking at the street signs and thinking, "Only seven hours ago I read those signs with eyes full of happiness, now those same eyes are looking at those same signs and want to cry." When we reached home my maid was excitedly awaiting my return, and seemed very pleased with all the flowers and cotillion ribbons that I had brought back, though once or twice I caught her looking at me with a worried expression as though she knew that I was hurt—but did not dare say she noticed it! I did not cry that night, but lay very still, staring up at the ceiling, watching the sunlight creep through the chinks in the window blinds, and form little patterns of light. When it was time to get up, I knew that the little girl Era was gone not to return any more, and that a new grown up Era had taken her place for good. And so ended my first ball. That year Petia married, then two years later was divorced. Then one day he came to call on me — when I was married — smoked seventeen cigarettes, and suddenly asked me to elope with him, which I refused to do on account of my children. Then he married again, and now he is dead. "May the earth rest lightly on his grave."

After that ball I went to many others — fourteen in all, until the day I became engaged. Though I was very young and impressionable after Petia went out of my life I did not fall in love any more, though one boy for a while interested me a good deal, amused me and I liked him better than all the others. Perhaps something more serious might have come of that, but I did not see much of him and that intangible “something” that might have developed into a deeper feeling, passed away, without leaving any lasting impression. After that first ball the joyous care-free spirit of life seemed to be replaced by a more serious one, and soon, very soon I grew tired of dancing and begged my mother to take me away, to Italy, for instance, where we could roam around together, or else allow me to go on with my studies, back in the schoolroom with the Professor, Mlle. Jacobi and all my other teachers. But my mother had other plans for me and before I knew it I became engaged to Count Alexander Feodorovitch Keller, a brother officer of Miki in the Chevalier Guard Regiment. I had met him at several balls, and though I could see that I pleased him very much I had never thought seriously about him.

It was only when my mother began to speak of him often approvingly, that I realized that his courtship was serious and that she considered him a suitable candidate for my hand. She had always had a kindly feeling towards him, because his father, General Count Theodore Keller had been a very great friend of hers, from the days of her girlhood, until the time he was killed in the Japanese

war, and she firmly believed that his only son was as chivalrous and as wonderful a man as his father had been. As a little girl I had known the older Count Keller quite well, for he often came to our house in town and also visited us in Troitskoe. He liked me and I remember so well a day when looking at me he said to my mother earnestly, "Wouldn't it be nice if some day she married my son?" while my mother answered with a smile, "Very nice indeed." And so when I came out and young Keller became interested in me my mother was very pleased and only laughed and shook her head indulgently when people told her that he led a very gay life; saying, "A young man must sow his wild oats — he'll make all the better husband afterwards."

One evening at Countess Schouvaloff's house, three houses down the street from ours, at a very small party to which I had gone alone with my brother, Count Keller proposed to me in the little round drawing-room, where we were sitting on a sofa together. A little frightened, a little excited, a little pleased at the fact of a proposal, I answered demurely thanking him "for the honour" in the way my mother had told me to do when proposed to — adding however that I could not marry him, as I did not love him, but that I would be glad to be the best of friends. That done I soon asked my brother to take me home, as I was eager to tell the news to my mother, feeling very grown up indeed.

"What were you and Keller whispering about?" asked Miki as we walked home. "Look here," he continued as I didn't answer, "I don't want you to become interested

in him, for he is not the man I want you to marry, hear me? ”

“Hear nothing! ” I retorted rudely, running upstairs to my mother’s room, where I found her in bed, anxiously waiting for my return.

“Muzzie, Muzzie, Count Keller has proposed to me! ” I cried, throwing my arms around her.

Gently she pushed me away and gazed searchingly at my flushed face.

“Well, and what did you tell him? ” she asked.

“Oh, I thanked him for the honour and said I could not marry him because I did not love him! ” I answered, triumphantly, thinking she would praise me for my perfect behaviour.

But she shook her head and said: “Now why did you say that, Baby? He is a very nice boy, loves you very much and would make you a very good husband. Remember he is my dear old friend Theo’s son and is surely as fine a man as his father was. Better let me call him up and tell him that you answered hastily and that he may win you yet! I have a secret to tell you besides,” she continued, “but it is something that you must keep to your very own self; this year I have had strange pains in my heart and am very much afraid of dying before you are happily married. That is one of the main reasons why I’d like to see you married to a good man, who will love and take care of you when I am gone.” That argument proved most effective of all though it upset me completely, and, sobbing, I said she might call Keller up whenever she wished. So next morning she spoke to him on the tele-

phone, whereupon he came right away, bringing a large bunch of roses and a great box of candy. After that he came every day and before I realized what was happening, I found myself consenting to be engaged to him, while he presented me with a very fine ruby engagement ring, and a huge basket of flowers — the traditional offering of one's future husband. On the betrothal day there was an official *Te Deum* in our drawing-room that afternoon, and then another phase of my life began. I was given many jewels; a beautiful diamond brooch from my mother; a gold bracelet with a diamond anchor pendant from my future husband, also hoops of pearls, a chain of Ural mountain precious stones, some pieces of Louis XVI drawing-room furniture, rare etchings and china; then large diamond earrings from his mother, and many, many other presents from members of both families and friends. My immediate family (excepting mother) was very much opposed to the marriage, saying that Alexander Keller's tastes and mine were too different to make a successful marriage, he enjoying a gay life while I had been brought up so simply in the strict and loving atmosphere of my home; but their arguments, conducted not very tactfully, instead of persuading me, only made me suddenly obstinate and brought me closer to my future husband than I had been before. Shortly after my betrothal I was created "Maid of Honour to the Empress" (a title bestowed upon girls belonging to certain families), and given the diamond insignia or "Chiffre," as it was usually called. Then we went to Troitskoe for the summer, while my trousseau was being prepared for the wedding that was

to take place at the end of August. It was in Troitskoe that I suddenly became frightened, and without saying a word to anyone, wrote Alexander a letter, begging him to break off our engagement. But due to the fact that he was a poor letter reader and would often carry his letters for days and weeks unopened — I found that particular letter of mine, after our wedding, *still sealed* in the pocket of his overcoat!

As he was an officer of the Chevalier Guard Regiment, it was at his Regimental Church that the wedding took place with due pomp and ceremony.

I remember so clearly every detail of that day. In the morning the hours seemed to race by, as I sat silently with cold fingers and little shivers running down my back, anxiously watching the great bronze Empire clock and wishing that its hands would not move so fast. Dressed in a red jersey sailor blouse and a short dark blue skirt, with my hair streaming down my back I must have looked like a frightened little girl, for suddenly Aunt Lize Kourakine came up to me and taking me in her arms began to cry, as she whispered:

“Oh you are such a baby — much, much too young to be married!”

After lunch, when I could not swallow a morsel of food, my mother said gently:

“It is time to dress now darling, come along,” and led me into her room, where my bridal clothes were laid out on her bed. According to a Russian custom, which she desired to perform herself, she bathed me and then slipped over my head my bridal lingerie made of the finest batiste,

embroidered with a lovely design of orange blossoms and trimmed with yards of beautiful Valenciennes lace. White silk girdle, white silk and lace petticoat, white silk stockings — one by one she handed them to me, kissing and blessing each article as she helped me dress. Then, again according to custom, my little nephew slipped a gold coin into my shoe, while my maid, who was dressing my hair, whispered a special prayer, as with the help of several of my girlhood friends she arranged my wreath of orange blossoms. My wedding dress of lovely soft white silk with a V décolletage and an immense train was so heavy that it took five people — the great dressmaker herself with four of her assistants — to lift it and put it over my head. Then my mother draped the voluminous veil, pinned on my left shoulder the diamond insignia of Maid of Honour to the Empress, and fastened around my neck the magnificent diamond necklace of twenty solitaires — that was her final wedding gift. The handkerchief that she gave me to carry had belonged to my grandmother, Princess Lobanov, and was exceptionally beautiful, bearing her Paskevitch crest, embroidered in one corner and grandmother's monogram in the other. I still possess that handkerchief as it was miraculously saved during the Revolution by my maid, at the same time as my lace Court dress, several gold, silver and enamel bibelots, handpainted old fans, embroidered linens and other valuables that were later on brought out of Russia for me by friends and most of which I have with me now.

When the ceremony of dressing was over — I was taken into the drawing-room, where I was blessed with a golden

Holy Icon, first by my mother and father, then by my Parents of Honour: uncle Dmitry and my godmother Princess Irina Paskevitch. After the blessing, the best man Prince "Toka" Gagarine arrived bringing a bouquet of white roses that he presented to me, as he said the traditional words: "The bridegroom is in church."

That meant that it was time for us to go and I left the house and entered the landau, accompanied by my father, my godmother and my little nephew who marched ahead of me carrying the Holy Icon.

When we drove up to the Chevalier Guard Regimental Church there was a big crowd in the streets waiting for my arrival and as I came out of the carriage and stumbled, I heard the crowd groan and then some one say distinctly,

"Oh, what a bad omen to stumble — she will be an unlucky bride." With those words ringing in my ears I stepped into the vestibule where the Regimental officers were standing lined up on either side forming a guard of honour. As I passed my brother he pulled off my white wrap whispering,

"You're not going to be married in your cloak, are you Water-Smackey?" This made me giggle a little then want to cry, as on my father's arm I entered the church.

When it was over I drove home, this time alone with my husband in the carriage, to receive the congratulations of the guests. Sir Arthur Nicholson, the English Ambassador clasped my hand with such fervour that he pressed my wedding ring into my flesh and made my finger bleed. After the endless wedding dinner that tired me out I changed into my travelling clothes and that evening we

left for our honeymoon that was to be spent in the Kellers' country place in the government of Riazan.

The next day we arrived at Zaisk where we got out of the train and where troikas were waiting to take us to my husband's estate "Sennitsy." We had to drive about fifteen miles and on the way were stopped several times by villagers, bringing us presents of cocks and hens, eggs and embroidered towels. As we had no room in our carriage for all those gifts, we had them put into my maid's carriage that was following ours and to her great disgust she had to drive most of the way accompanied by a lot of cackling birds. Being a very prim, smart and fashionable looking person she was perfectly furious at her predicament and made such angry faces at the poor birds that I could not help laughing all the way down, exploding several times when we were stopped to listen to more welcoming speeches and to receive more birds that were promptly transferred to Tatiana's carriage.

Finally arriving at the house we were met by a crowd of employees and servants of the estate and a little girl, Alice Obrecht, daughter of the superintendent, recited a poem, and with a curtsy offered me a beribboned bouquet. All would have gone well had not my maid unfortunately arrived at that very moment with her carriage full of birds and catching a glimpse of her indignant face, I suddenly exploded again in a wild fit of laughter to everyone's pained surprise. Grabbing the bouquet I murmured a few incoherent words of thanks, kissed the top of the little girl's head and flew up the steps into the house in a way that was anything but dignified and bridal, and

dropping into the first chair laughed and laughed. The strain of the last few days with the climax of ceremonies, speeches, birds, eggs and curtseys was too much for me and throwing my newly acquired matronly dignity to the winds, I became for a few minutes my usual self, always ready to laugh at the slightest provocation.

In the evening after dinner there were fireworks that reflected fantastically in the three lakes near the house, creating series of really lovely pictures.

Sennitsy was a pretty place though its beauty could not compare with that of Troitskoe, nor did it have its charm. The house of red brick and white stone had been built quite recently in place of the old one that had been completely demolished. It was surrounded by a park with several fine avenues, but its chief attraction to me lay in the three lakes at the foot of the hill on which stood the house.

We remained in the country for nearly four weeks, then the honeymoon ended, and we returned to Petersburg where a large and beautiful apartment had been prepared for us in one of the new houses on the Potemkinskaia street situated conveniently near the regiment. That winter I did not go out much, but remained a great deal at home, continuing to study and read. It was then that I read Haeckel's *Antropogenie*, *Life of Paracelsus*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the *History of Alexander I*, and several books on astronomy and occultism. Despite my literary studies that I took very seriously, I was still very much of a little girl and when alone, used to let my hair down and wear my old school-room frocks. I was a child in

many ways and spent hours with my old teachers who often came to see me and with whom I used to talk wistfully about old days. Sometimes we would pretend that we were having a lesson again, but it was a sad game and we soon gave it up. My greatest pleasure was to take them driving in my open *calèche* drawn by two fine black horses and bearing a dignified coachman and a footman on the box. We used to drive for hours and the enjoyment of my old friends made me very happy.

Once I hid under the piano in the drawing-room, something having upset me greatly, and was extremely mortified to have the old grey-haired butler find me sitting there crying bitterly with all my beautiful dignity gone.

"Never mind, your Highness," he said kindly, giving me a helping hand as I crawled out on all fours. "Don't cry, it is life!"

To this day I feel grateful to him for those simple human words — for it was not the butler speaking to his young Countess, but an old and kindly man trying to comfort a frightened child.

My husband did not like Djohanson my bull terrier, who hated him in return, so that I had to leave Djohanson at home. Nearly every day he used to come and call on me and the doorman would put him in the elevator and send him up like a real guest. He always came when my husband was away and spent hours with me in the afternoon, but flatly refused to stay for dinner always saying good-bye at the same hour, and insisting to be let out. I would then hug and kiss him and take him downstairs myself. One day on his way to call on me, a new

doorman chased him away with a broom. It must have hurt his feelings terribly for he disappeared, and we never saw him again.

The next summer my son was born, then two years later my daughter. But the marriage was not a success, my family being perfectly right in holding that our tastes were too dissimilar, and after four years of married life, desperately unhappy years as far as I was concerned — with my little son's death as a climax that nearly killed me — we decided to separate.

When the divorce was finally pronounced we agreed as to exactly which months of the year my little girl would spend with me and which with her grandmother Countess Marie Keller, née Princess Schahovskoy. It was when she was staying with her grandmother in the south of Russia that the Revolution broke out, and they fled aboard a ship that finally brought them safely to France. For five years I did not know whether my daughter was alive or dead; all means of communication having been stopped by the bolsheviks, and it was only in November, 1922, when I escaped from Russia and came to England, that I at last found out that she was alive and well taken care of by her grandmother — one of the few Russians who had managed to save some of her property, by purchasing a villa in Cannes before the Revolution. As I had nothing in the world except fifty dollars given to me on the day I left Russia by the American Relief Administration in Petrograd, fifty dollars that had dwindled during my journey to the alarming sum of two or three dollars, with no possibility of getting any money anywhere

except through work, which was not easy to find those days in London, and as my former mother-in-law was comparatively well off and able to give my daughter the necessary comfort and education that I was unable to afford, I decided to leave her entirely in her grandmother's hands, giving up the months when according to the agreement she belonged to me. I clearly saw that this sacrifice on my part would be the very best and kindest thing I could do for her, while I began a life of hard work and poverty that I could not possibly ask her to share.

But speaking of my daughter has carried me too much ahead and I must return to the year when the World War broke out. I was living then with my parents in Troitskoe, though I had my own apartment in Petrograd, where I spent the winters. Often I travelled abroad with my mother, mostly through Italy, trying to forget the tragedies I had been through. My poor mother was heart-broken at the thought that she had urged me to make a marriage that had proved so unhappy, and we clung to each other very closely, sorrow having brought us together in the most perfect companionship and intimacy. While we were in Petrograd, however, I went out a good deal with the gay young married crowd, always trying to forget and not succeeding — dancing, roller-skating, dining, driving in troikas, going to the theatre and the gypsies — always on the go, always wanting to do something new to forget. But such a life could not satisfy me and I would come home more restless and unhappy than ever. What I would have done I really don't know, probably I would have remarried soon; when suddenly without any warn-

ing out of a clear sky came the great thunderbolt — the World War! My very dear American friend Ethel Palmer (now Mrs. Shirley Morgan of Princeton) and her brother Carleton Palmer had just left us after visiting us in Troitskoe and I had seen them safely off in Petrograd, and returned to the country when the news came that war had broken out and that my brother's regiment was due to leave almost immediately. So in post-haste my mother and I rushed back to Petrograd, arriving just in time to see my brother off. I'll never forget that early morning in the Schpalernaia, when the squadrons of the Chevalier Guard Regiment lined up, preparing to leave for the front. They were so good to look at, so full of life, so gallantly eager to go — only to be brought back shortly afterwards, dead or wounded!

Within a day or two I had joined the Red Cross and began training as a war nurse, starting at the very beginning, washing floors, lighting kitchen stoves, doing all the dirtiest work that they purposely made us do in order to see whether we could stand it or not. About three hundred women began the training and only ninety-two finished, so severe and uncompromising were the requirements. But I became so interested that my short war training over and the examinations safely behind me, I passed on to a higher nurses' training, ending up with the regular medical course. For eight years I studied, passed examinations and worked at the main hospital, also Warsaw and the front, where I was decorated for war work. During all those years I lived at the hospital, having given up my lovely apartment, my servants, my pretty clothes, everything, for

heart and soul I belonged to my work, and I only saw my parents in my spare time when I'd run over to spend an hour with them. I was at the hospital when the Revolution broke out, working as usual and also writing my diary every day, according to the habit I had formed when I was seven. Those diaries are still in Russia if they have not been destroyed — all but the "Diary of the Revolution" that was saved and given by my mother's maid, Tatiana, to Dr. Golder, who brought it out to me when I was in London. It has no beginning but the part he brought out starts on March 5, 1917.

A Diary of the Russian Revolution

1917

*Monday, Feb. 20*¹
(March 5)

THIS morning a young woman was brought to the Dispensary in a state of utter exhaustion. She had fainted in the street after standing all night in a "bread line," afraid of losing her place if she left it for even a short rest, as she had two hungry little children at home and not a morsel of bread to give them until she brought some back from the Bakery. Her poor coat was threadbare and she seemed half frozen. . . . No wonder, the cold is terrific and there's a sharp wind that nearly took my breath away, as I ran across the yard to the Surgical ward. In the Dispensary the poor are complaining bitterly of the hardships they have to endure. They all say the same thing: wood is scarce and expensive, there is not enough bread and those wretched bread lines simply wear them out. It's really appalling to see, in front of all the Bakeries, endless queues of people that stamp their feet and swing their arms trying to keep warm. Some

¹ The double dates are used to avoid confusion between the Julian or "old style" calendar, official in Russia at the time that this diary was written, and Gregorian or "new style" calendar followed by nearly all other nations. The top date is according to the Julian calendar, the date in parenthesis, according to the Gregorian.

laugh and joke, but mostly one sees sad and anxious faces that bear the unmistakable signs of weakness and hunger. The tragic part of it is that the situation seems to be growing worse and worse with no prospect of any immediate relief. As a result of all this trouble the workmen are very restless and there have been strikes at the Poutiloff works and other factories today.

Tuesday, Feb. 21
(March 6)

On my way home this afternoon, just as I left the hospital, I saw a wretched little dog perishing of cold and hunger. Its bones were sticking out in the most ghastly way and as for its eyes — the anguish in them cannot be described! Right next to where the little thing lay was a grocery store — so I dashed into it, bought an enormous sausage and was just about to feed the beastie, when all of a sudden passers-by, of the kind one sees in the hospital district, began to stop and stare and grumble out loud: "Look at her feeding a *dog*, when *Christians* are hungry nowadays. Ugh, those idle rich!" I was not wearing my Red Cross uniform and probably my sealskin coat made them think I was an "idle rich." To my disgust quite a little crowd gathered around me and the comments became so hostile I was glad to get away with the dog under one arm and the sausage under the other, as fast as we could go. Luckily, I was not far from the stables, where my ex-patient Stepan, the drosky driver keeps his horses and, luckily too, he was there himself, so that I could leave the dog safely in his care. He put it in one of the empty

stalls, where immediately it curled up in the straw, its tummy bulging full of that sausage. I told Stepan what happened and how hostile the crowd was. He shook his head gravely. "Don't do that again, Little Sister," he said, "it's too dangerous. Remember there are many hungry people these days and it makes them angry to see an animal fed." He's right, of course, but nevertheless it was a horrid incident. Nothing like it ever happened to me before. It proves that there is a feeling of hostility among the poor that is ready to crop up at the slightest pretext. The spirit of unrest among the workmen seems to be growing all the time too, for there have been more riots today in the factories.

I am on night duty now. The ward is quiet. Even Vania is sleeping peacefully after his operation. The tetanus case worries me however. It's rather a big responsibility to be in charge of the ward tonight.

Wednesday, Feb. 22
(*March 7*)

I was free this afternoon and went with Muzzie² to the Palace for two hours and helped make surgical bandages. It does seem like child's play after the grim hospital work, but it rested me and did me good. Muzzie was beaming. Poor darling, she'd be so happy if I gave up the Hospital and worked at the Palace with the other Court ladies. This medical course of mine distresses her greatly, I know, and yet, at the same time, she is rather proud of me for going through with it and passing my examinations suc-

² My mother.

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² My mother.

cessfully. She has given me a box for the theatre tomorrow. I shall go and take some of my fellow students along.

Thursday, Feb. 23
(March 8)

Well, I cannot go to the theatre, after all! The Matron just sent for me and told me to be in the operating room at eight o'clock this evening, as it is my turn to assist Professor D. Ivan Martinoff's right leg is to be amputated, also Vassily Toumanoff's hand — it certainly looked awful this morning in the surgery! I'm sorry to give up the theatre tonight (Youri Beliaieff's *Psyche* with a splendid cast), but I wouldn't miss the operations for anything, as I faithfully promised both Ivan and Vassily that I'd be with them in case they were operated on, any time of the day or night, even if it wasn't my turn to be on duty. Having taken care of them for so long I naturally feel very worried about them, specially Ivan, so patient and good and pathetic. I'll never forget the letter he made me write to his wife today, just as though he knew what was going to happen. And I'll *never* get used to all this suffering no matter how long the war lasts. For nearly three years now, I've seen it day and night, and yet each case hurts me as much as the first ones did and makes me perfectly miserable. It isn't true that one gets hardened and indifferent as time goes on, for I know that most of my fellow students feel the way I do. However I've learned not to cry — that's one good thing. It was awful the way I used to weep at first.

I believe I'll give my theatre tickets to Sister Vera and she can invite whomever she pleases.

Friday, Feb. 24
(March 9)

Exciting things are happening. This morning, in the Refectory, at breakfast, I asked Sister Vera about the theatre and was amazed to hear that she never got there on account of street riots. She and five other girls left the hospital at 6 P.M. and started to walk to the street-car line, when all of a sudden they heard shots not far off and a policeman shouted to them to turn back, as it was unsafe to go down the Nevsky Prospect, where crowds of workmen had gathered and were singing revolutionary songs and clamouring for "bread and peace." Whether anyone was hurt the girls did not know, but one of the doctors told me that there have been more disorders this morning and that the Cossacks have killed many rioters. There is a general strike in all the factories and no newspapers have been published today. Sister Natalia just telephoned she could not leave the Vasily Ostroff on account of the bridges being barricaded. Such doings! . . . and here I never even suspected that anything unusual was happening! Last night, everything was perfectly quiet around the hospital and after the operations were over I went straight to bed without seeing anyone or hearing anything unusual!

Everyone is tense and the orderlies and maids gather in groups and whisper excitedly. The soldiers are very much interested but do not express any opinions. Our "red" Sisters look triumphant and the Matron very severe.

Muzzie telephoned that she was coming over, but I persuaded her to stay at home. She says she has lots of news to tell me. I'll try and run over later. In my Red Cross uniform I am perfectly safe.

Saturday, Feb. 25

(March 10)

Strikes and disorders continue. The rioters are breaking into the bakeries and taking all the bread they can find — red banners have appeared with various revolutionary inscriptions and the Marseillaise is being sung to the accompaniment of shots. On all sides people rush around excitedly imparting sensational rumours. "They say" there are many wounded and quite a few killed. The morale of the hospital is none too good. The maids and orderlies buzz around the patients and excite them. All the soldiers seem sullen, some of them even defiant. But they do not express themselves openly as they are not quite sure that what they hear is the truth. In church at vespers this evening, our old Father Pafnuty spoke about love, patience and obedience, but without much success. The soldiers did not seem to be in a receptive frame of mind for such ideas and looked like great sulky boys that didn't want to listen to any tiresome preachings. Also I noticed that during the prayers for the Emperor and the Imperial family they did not cross themselves as usual, but made a big display of devotion whenever the prayers concerned the army and themselves. However Pavel touched me greatly this evening. As I came up to his bedside he whispered, "Don't be afraid little Sister, we won't let anyone

hurt *you*." But when I asked him what he meant he wouldn't answer. Strange undercurrents seem to be flowing through mysterious channels and the air is charged with electricity. Muzzie just phoned that everything is quiet on their street. She will send the car for me tomorrow at noon.

Sunday, Feb. 26
(*March 11*)

After church I went home in the car. As we were crossing the Potemkinskaia we had to stop because of a large crowd that was marching with red flags and banners bearing inscriptions "Down with the government," and "Down with the war." The procession seemed to be on its way to the Nevsky and was moving along rapidly, when all of a sudden a woman, noticing the car, left the crowd, jumped on the running-board and shaking her fist at the chauffeur screamed: "Lackey, servant, low one, get out of there and join us! Let her walk!" Poor Ivan was so frightened even his ears went white. Two other women climbed on to the running board, yelling insults at me. For a minute I thought they'd get in the car and drag me out but a man shouted: "Leave her alone, she's a Sister" (luckily I was wearing my uniform) and after a few parting yells the women obeyed him and ran after the procession. The car then was able to move on and in a few minutes I was safely at home. Ivan confessed he had been terrified for my sake.

The General^{*} said that the Governor of Petrograd

* My Father, whom we children all called "the General" because he

has issued orders forbidding any gatherings and warning the citizens that the troops shall take "extreme measures" in case of disobedience. That means there'll be plenty of shooting as the crowds are getting bigger and bigger every hour. Old Peter (the butler) had just returned from the stores with some gruesome tales. He said he saw a policeman shot and many rioters wounded, also that the crowds on the Nevsky were getting larger all the time. Evidently no one has the slightest intention of obeying the Military Governor's orders. There is a rumour that the Volynsky Guard regiment has revolted and will not open fire on the rioters, but so far that has not been confirmed. Certainly things look pretty bad. Ever since Rasputin's death we've all had the feeling of sitting on a volcano and it seems to me as though the volcano has started to erupt.

Monday, Feb. 27
(March 12)

A disaster! The Douma has been dissolved, Rodzianko having received the order from the Emperor at midnight. Oh, what a terrible thing to happen at a time like this. Being free, I rushed over to see the Parents this morning so as to hear all the news. Everything seemed peaceful though the trams were not running and the streets were unusually deserted. But just as I was in the middle of the "Tauride Gardens," a machine gun started to fire on my right — another one answered on my left, and there I was, caught between the two. The only thing to do was

was a General; my Mother did not approve of having us call him that but we did.

run, and run I certainly did, as fast as my legs could carry me. In fact I never stopped running, until I reached home and arrived there half dead from breathlessness and excitement. The Parents were standing by the bay window and saw me running. Muzzie heard the machine guns, of course, and nearly died of fright at my predicament. Both were so upset their poor old hands were shaking while they made numerous little signs of the Cross over me and hugged me, and scolded me, and wept. They wouldn't let me walk back and sent me to the Hospital in the car, though of course it was much more dangerous to be in a car than on foot. However we got to the Hospital safely and to protect Ivan on his way back I tied a Red Cross badge around his arm. In my room I found a note from Nastinka.⁴ She has left for the Caucasus, as her sister is very ill.

Later in the evening

Events are moving with great rapidity: the Douma has refused to be dissolved and has gone into session, openly disobeying the Emperor's order: . . . the Volynsky Regiment has killed many of its own officers and joined the Revolutionists; prisons have been opened by the mobs and the prisoners allowed to escape. Several government buildings are in flames. The Revolutionists are burning all the criminal and political archives, so as to destroy all guilty records, and dance and sing in wild glee as the incriminating papers are consumed by the flames. The city is

⁴ Countess Anastasia Hendrikoff, lady in waiting to the Empress Alexandra and my childhood friend.

in a complete turmoil. Barricades are being erected in the streets — machine guns are going in all directions and the confusion is indescribable. The police are now shooting on the crowds from attics and roofs, where they have concealed their machine guns. This, of course, has infuriated the rioters and they're after the policemen, calling them "pharaohs" and traitors. Looking out of the window I just saw a horrible thing happen. A policeman, pursued by a howling crowd of hundreds of maddened people came dashing down our street, leaping and bounding like a hunted hare, his eyes wild with terror. As the crowd was gaining on him, he suddenly dashed into the open doorway of the apartment house opposite the Hospital, his pursuers after him. They chased him up the stairs (so I was told later) and though he pounded on all doors as he galloped up, not one door was opened to save him. Finally he came to the topmost landing, where he was trapped, caught and torn to pieces. His poor body hideously mangled was brought on a stretcher by our orderlies to the Hospital Mortuary Chapel. All this happened in a few minutes and has left me sick and shaking all over.

Midnight

All the streets around the Hospital are dark — not a light anywhere, but in that darkness one can distinguish thousands of silently milling human forms. No shooting, no singing, no yelling now — not a sound, except the shuffling of all those feet.

The latest news is that the Douma is trying to organize a "Temporary Government" and that Rodzianko, Presi-

dent of the Douma, has telegraphed the Emperor, telling him how serious the situation is. The garrison of the town is uprising. Regiment after Regiment is arresting its officers and joining the Revolution, for that's what it is; a Revolution, no doubt about that.

Our Dispensary is going to be open all night as "First Aid Station" for the wounded. I am to be on duty at 4 A.M. so I'd better go to bed right now, though I know I won't be able to sleep a wink.

Tuesday, Feb. 28
(March 13)

Five wounded were brought in during my watch, but none very seriously hurt. After having their wounds dressed they all left the Dispensary and the emergency cots are still empty.

Muzzie has been here much to my dismay. I have begged her not to leave the house but she came over, wearing a shawl on her head instead of a hat and Tatiana's old coat. Dressed that way she was sure to pass unnoticed and seemed quite excited over her adventure. But she has faithfully promised not to do it another time.

The shooting is still going on, though probably soon all the Police will be wiped out. Great armoured lorries with red flags are tearing up and down the street. Some of them carry machine guns that shoot all the time. There is no doubt — Petrograd is completely in the hands of the Revolutionists. Nearly all our orderlies have disappeared and several of the convalescing soldiers have left the Hospital without asking permission. The maids are

insolent and quite a few have refused to do any work. However they still obey the Matron, by force of habit probably. The operating room is cold today and the cook has not prepared any dinner. Looks like the Revolution has begun right here.

Wednesday, March 1
(March 14)

Three operations this morning: bullets extracted from the arm of a new Tartar soldier, just arrived from the front — Stepan Mordkin's fingers amputated and little Isaac the Jew's leg amputated too. The Tartar was magnificently brave. He was operated on without any anaesthetic (on account of his weak heart) and never even moved, while it was being done. He only moaned in a low voice at regular intervals, while the perspiration poured down his face. He is a Pagan and on his bedside table stands a little wooden idol to which he prays with great fervour. He has so much quiet dignity that the other boys never dream of making fun of his idol — on the contrary he seems somehow to command their respect, which is most unusual. The Revolution is still in full swing and many officers have been killed by the soldiers. The General must not go out in the streets on any account. Deaf as he is, with his way of uttering comments to the top of his voice — he'd be killed at once. Besides he simply won't take off his General's uniform, and to be seen in that would be fatal.

The officers at the Hospital are very nervous. They do not leave the ward and mostly smoke in silence. The or-

derlies (some came back last night) are very insolent with them though they seem a little more decent today.

The Revolutionary Douma has formed a "Temporary Committee" with Rodzianko at its head, but at the same time in room no. 13 of the Tauride Palace there has appeared a mysterious "Soviet" or "Council of Workmen and Soldier's Deputies" that from the very start seems to be most distrustful of the Temporary Committee, watches every move it does and howls for a "Republic and Peace." Finally the Cossacks have revolted too and gone over to the Revolution, so has the Grand Duke Cyril who marched to the Tauride Palace at the head of the Garde Marines. The Emperor, they say, is on his way to Tzarskoe, but where exactly no one knows. There have been many arrests, among them Protopopoff, Sturmer, in fact nearly all the former Ministers, the Metropolitan Pitirim and many others. They are all kept at the Tauride Palace.

In the afternoon I walked over there. Crowds surround it: soldiers, workmen, citizens of all types, all wildly excited — the place made me think of an ant-hill. As I came to the front steps I heard a rather wild looking individual harangue the crowds from the balcony. He was shouting that the population should trust the new Government, but at the same time watch every move it made. Nice way to "trust" anyone, I should say! The crowd listened to him attentively and seemed to like best of all the part where he spoke of "watching the Government." A soldier standing next to me kept saying over and over again: "That's true, that's right!" On my other side stood a young woman that seemed frankly bored and yawned constantly and loudly,

making the sign of the Cross over her mouth every time she yawned. Occasionally she'd shout what the others were shouting, but without any conviction or apparent interest. Finally, long before the speech was over, she started to elbow her way out of the crowd, muttering, "Enough of this, it's tiresome." Her place was taken by a stocky little soldier who kept spitting the shells of sun flower seeds and howling to the top of his thin, quavering voice a string of more or less senseless remarks about nothing in particular. He seemed to listen to himself much more attentively than to the orator and apparently enjoyed his own utterances tremendously. As I was leaving, a quiet, decent looking old man started to talk to me in a confidential undertone. As nowadays everyone seems to be talking to everyone else, whether acquainted or not, I listened to what he was saying. With tears in his eyes he said that there was a serious rumour about forcing the Emperor to abdicate and that personally he thought it was the only way to save the lives of the Imperial family, unless the troops at the front proved faithful, marched on Petrograd and stamped the Revolution out. "What do you think?" he asked me dolefully. "Nothing at all," I answered promptly. "I am far too bewildered to understand anything these days," and walked away. After all he might have been a provocator, as the town is probably full of them, and it's wiser to keep silent. Just as I was turning around the corner I heard someone call my name and, looking back, saw Sister Natalia running after me. "What on earth are you doing here?" she cried. "You know you've no business to be out alone at a time like this. Go

right back to the Hospital and stay where you belong! ” But I wouldn’t be bullied. “ I’m going to see this Revolution with my very own eyes and hear everything with my very own ears,” I replied firmly, though I quite expected to be reported to the Matron. But she burst out laughing instead and slapped me on the back saying, “ Good for you! I like plucky girls. However let me be your companion from now on and we’ll see this Revolution together. I’m older than you are, more experienced and have a much wiser head on my shoulders. All right? ” “ All right,” I answered and meant it too. She’s an awfully good sort and I like her. Besides it really is more fun to see things with someone else than be alone. Tonight I’m on duty, but tomorrow we’ll go out and see some more of this Revolution.

Thursday, March 2
(March 15)

The rapidity with which events are happening reminds me of a cinema reel. The Emperor was on his way from Mohilev to Tzarskoe, when at Dno he was told that his train could not proceed north, as the line was in the hands of the Revolutionists. So he decided to go to Moscow but hearing that Moscow had also joined the Revolution, he proceeded to Pskov, where General Russky is, probably hoping that Russky and his army would stand up for him and protect him. But it appears that Russky, having got in touch with Rodzianko, General Alexeieff and all the other Army Commanders by telegraph, presented himself to the Emperor and told him that the only thing for him to do

was abdicate, as that was the desire of the Temporary Committee. If he abdicates in favour of Alexei, who will be Regent then? The Grand Duke Michael? Certainly not the Empress! The whole thing is so unbelievable that I can hardly realize that I am really living through all this and not dreaming. Perhaps we'll all be guillotined soon? Who knows where a Revolution, once started, will stop! Every hour brings fresh events and they come so rapidly I have barely time to write them down, busy as I am with Hospital work and "seeing the Revolution" in my spare time. Then the Parents have to be visited too. Decidedly an existence too overcrowded with events. As soon as one has heard something new and begun to get used to it, another development occurs. Soon I shan't be able to write coherently. As it is I forgot to mention an "Order of the day" for the whole Army, called "Prikaz no. 1," issued by the Soviet on March 14 and composed by a man called Sokolov, who they say is the son of Father Sokolov, priest of the Winter Palace Church. What an irony if that is true! This "Prikaz" addressed to all the armies is the most demoralizing document ever invented and will completely destroy discipline if obeyed. It abolishes all rank and authority and places the officers at the entire mercy of the soldiers and their executive committees. I've heard too that terrible things are happening in Kronstadt, where sailors are arresting the officers and killing them after horrible torments. However no one knows the exact truth about that.

Friday, March 3
(March 16)

It has happened! The Emperor has abdicated in favour of his brother, as he does not wish to be separated from Alexei. That happened yesterday in Pskov, after the arrival of the Deputies of the Douma, Goutchkoff and Schoulgine, and their interview with him. But the Grand Duke Michael has renounced the throne too. They say Kerensky forced him to do it against Rodzianko's and Lvov's wishes. The Temporary Committee is no longer in existence, having formed a "Provisional Government" that will rule the Country until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

Saturday, March 4
(March 17)

I cannot help thinking of the Emperor. Alone, hunted, frightened, humiliated, hurt. He certainly has drunk the cup of bitterness to its very dregs. What will happen to him now? Will he and his family be allowed to live in Russia or go abroad? Muzzie heard that the Empress was stunned when the Grand Duke Paul told her about the abdication and would not believe it until she heard from the Emperor himself. She is alone with the children, and two of them have still got the measles.

The soldiers in the convalescing ward seem very excited; they have heard that the garrison of Petrograd shall not be sent to the front as a reward for having "saved the Revolution." That absurd expression, "saving the Revolution" is being used as the French say, *à tort et à*

travers. For instance one of the orderlies declared that the cook should be dismissed, as she refuses to leave the kitchen and parade the streets to "save the Revolution," and Dounia, the maid announced she had no time to prepare the baths for the Sisters today, as she had to go out and join a meeting that was "saving the Revolution." "Save the Revolution," is shouted by soldiers from armoured cars, as they go clattering by — by soap-box haranguers at every street corner, and positively by all who are trying to make a revolutionary speech, their name being legion. Altogether there's so much foolish talk that it makes one's "ears wither" — to use my brother's elegant expression. Everyone is arguing about the forthcoming "Constituent Assembly" now, and how the tongues of the uneducated brethren stumble over those two treacherous words! There was a meeting ("*mitinka*" they pronounced it) downstairs in the servants hall for the orderlies and maids. Polia the maid told me all about it. She said that they have chosen an Executive Committee and that she is a member of it — poor foolish old Polia, who can neither read nor write! The Watchman is President, the Doorman, Vice President and Piotr, the cook's help, Secretary. He certainly will draw up fine "protocoles" of the meetings, to judge by the way he writes the lists of articles necessary for his kitchen. I asked her what they did there so long (the meeting lasted for hours), but she didn't seem to know. "We all talked," she said rather vaguely, "and then it took us some time to choose the members of the committee. Everybody wanted to be in it and there were quite a few quarrels and even a fight."

Already the President of the Committee is asserting his authority by walking about the Hospital with his hat on his head, perched at an alarmingly jaunty angle — while the Vice President smokes his vile cigars indoors and throws the stubs on the floor with a great display of independence. The Matron goes about with her head high in the air and doesn't seem to notice these first attempts at deliberate insolence. My room being right over the servants' hall I can hear an awful babel of voices. Evidently another meeting!

Later

It isn't a meeting, it's an uproar! What on earth is it all about? The voices sound threatening and one in particular is raised above the din and seems to be yelling over and over the same thing: "Down with " . . . somebody or something — I can't make out that last word! Whom are they after now? Not the Emperor, as he is "down" already. Not the Douma? I wonder. The howls sound ominous to me. They seem very excited, very militant and very, very angry. It's just like being in the streets, when the crowd is at its worst in a state of "mass hysteria." It's no use trying to sleep. I'll go and sit in one of the wards for a while until it's over!

Sunday, March 5
(*March 18*)

This morning Polia told me all about the meeting in detail. She seemed very much upset, poor old soul, and said she felt it was her duty to warn us about what was

going to happen. Having lived in the Hospital for twenty years she is naturally very much attached to the Matron and Sisters and last night's meeting has made her positively ill. She came into my room white as a sheet, with red eyes and a red nose. "Why Polia, what on earth's the matter?" I exclaimed, but she waved her arms at me frantically. "Sh-sh — be quiet," she whispered, then opened the door to make sure no one was eavesdropping and peered down the corridor, right and left. "No — they've not followed me," she muttered and, carefully closing the door and locking it, tiptoed to my side. "It's like this," she whispered into my very ear, "the Committee . . . you heard the noise they made last night?" — I nodded silently. "Well," she continued, "they've decided to get rid of the Matron, the Head Doctor and the Chief Surgeon. They've written a paper — a reso-reso something." "A resolution?" I suggested. "Yes, that's it, a revolution, that's the word . . . no it isn't. . . . Well anyhow, the Watchman, dirty dog" (here she spat) "The Doorman, may the Devil take him, and myself (!?) God forgive me, we're going to the Red Cross Headquarters and have them arrest the Matron and the Doctors and throw them out of the Hospital. And to think that they've chosen *me* to go along with them" (she started to weep), "and I dare not disobey! But I thought I'd tell you and you can warn the Matron — only God forbid that you mention my name! Why they'd kill me if they knew I had spoken to you. Promise you won't give me away." I promised. "But why do they want to arrest those people?" I asked. "Because they're against the Revolu-

tion, 'counter revolutionists' they called them and said they had to be arrested in order to save the Revolution." I nearly dropped off my chair . . . here it was again, that ridiculous slogan "save the Revolution!" Even Polia, poor old foolish Polia, was "saving the Revolution"! She looked so absurd I nearly burst out laughing, though goodness knows the situation is no laughing matter. "When are you going to Red Cross Headquarters, Polia?" I asked. "Tomorrow morning" she answered. "We've got the paper all ready. It says that the doctors and the Matron are enemies of the Revolution and must be arrested at once! And think! Only yesterday the Matron, God bless her, gave me a new dress!" Meditatively aside: "Maybe I'll put it on tomorrow to go there? — Ugh the dirty dogs, the traitors, the Judas — if only she could have *them* arrested instead!" "But Polia," I asked, "if that's the way you feel, why do you go with them? Why don't you tell them you won't have anything to do with them?" "Because I belong to them!" she interrupted fiercely. "Even though I love the Matron, as my own mother, and would gladly give my life for her I've got to stand by *the People* and do what they wish me to do. *The People* order, and I obey — that's why!" Her eyes were ablaze and in them I detected that fanatic expression that I've seen so often in the eyes of the "People" ever since the Revolution began. Strange to see it in Polia's usually kind and dumb old eyes — strange to hear her speak that way, proudly, defiantly, as though some spirit were prompting her — doubtless the mighty Spirit of the Revolution that is sweeping over Russia like

wild-fire. The next minute, however, she was herself again, the same old Polia we all know so well, though crying bitterly, her nose and eyes aflame, her hard-working fingers plucking at her shawl, her shoulders bent — a picture of misery and despair. I hugged her silently and gave her a glass of water, that she eagerly drank.

Poor old soul, what a tragedy for her to live through — not knowing what to do, wanting to be loyal to both sides, hating it all and suffering like a frightened child. When she left me, with the same precautions as when she came in I ran to the Matron and told her all I had heard, without mentioning Polia's name of course. "I thought that would happen," she said, "for they're just like children, always imitating the grown-ups. They've seen the Emperor overthrown, so now they'll overthrow all those that have any authority over them. It's bound to happen! Everywhere committees of the lower personnel are being formed and naturally, their first impulse is to get rid of their masters. Thank you, my dear, for warning me. I shall immediately communicate with both my "doomed" colleagues. Go to your room now — don't tell anyone about this, and wait till I send for you. I may need you." And that's just what I'm doing now — waiting and wondering what on earth is going to happen next right here in the Hospital and in Russia in general. The Provisional Government declares it wants "War to the end," that is: until a victorious peace. But the Soviet demands "the end of war" at once at any cost, and with no thought of victory whatsoever. Which shall it be? The Provisional Gov-

ernment seems to be the weaker of the two, while the Soviet gets stronger and more popular every day!

Monday evening, March 6
(March 19)

After seeing the doctors the Matron sent for me, and described the interview. She said they were very much amused at the thought of being dismissed by the Watchman and the Doorman, but, of course, decided to protect themselves immediately. They all three went right away to Red Cross Headquarters and there told the whole story. The Red Cross chiefs are simply distracted, as it appears that nearly all the Hospitals have formed Committees of the lower personnel similar to ours, and that they all demand the same thing: the removal of those in power and their immediate arrest. It's like an epidemic. The maids, laundresses, cooks, orderlies, etc. (delegates, they call themselves now) run from Hospital to Hospital telling all about their own Committees and obliging those that haven't any to form them instantly. The Red Cross Chiefs said the only thing to do was for the doctors and nurses to have Committees of their own, in order to oppose the Committees of the lower personnel and protect themselves that way. As soon as possible there'll be a general meeting of the doctors and nurses of our Hospital and their respective Executive Committees chosen. That seems a good solution which will probably come as a very unpleasant surprise to the maids and orderlies, who imagine that they are going to rule us from now on. Oh yes, I nearly forgot to mention that the Red Cross Chiefs also said that, in

order to pacify our local revolutionists and prevent any violence, they will have to send to our Hospital an official Investigator, or Commissar, to find out the reason why the servants want to arrest the Matron and the doctors. He will be here probably the day after tomorrow and sit in judgment over all. That will be interesting, as he'll have to use a lot of tact! The Hospital is in a ferment, as everyone has read the Matron's formal announcement on the blackboard that there is to be a grand meeting after tomorrow of the entire Hospital personnel, higher and lower (or "older" and "younger" as the two groups are to be called henceforth: "older" for the doctors and nurses, "younger" for the servants!). Everywhere one sees excited groups of Sisters. The doctors are very calm and seem half indifferent, half amused. The servants look perplexed and bothered. They cannot quite make out what it is all about and therefore are a little less sure of themselves and a little less insolent. In the excitement of our local Hospital Revolution, the Big Revolution is nearly forgotten.

Tuesday morning, March 7
(March 20)

The Matron told me this morning that our "delegates of the Kitchen" had been to Red Cross Headquarters with their "Resolution" and were promised a formal investigation. She talked on the phone to the Chief and he said that Prince V. would be sent as investigator tomorrow.

The Emperor has asked the Provisional Government

to allow him to stay in Tzarskoe until the children are well. Evidently he intends leaving the country. I wish he'd go at once — it seems so dangerous for him to stay here. Every day the Soviet grows stronger and so does its hatred of "Nicolai Romanov," as he is now called.

The streets are much quieter today and some of the officers of our Hospital have ventured out, wearing little red ribbons in the lapels of their coats. I don't know why those red ribbons affect me strangely. Why wear them at all? Our General does not. He's out again in the streets and even walked as far as the Hospital to see me. Unfortunately he won't keep silent and his loud remarks terrify me. As he was coming up the main stairs of the Hospital I heard him shout at the top of his voice to the doorman: "Hullo Revolutionist, have you cut anyone's throat today?" Aghast I hurried out on to the landing just in time to see the doorman's expression of furious hatred that was anything but reassuring. However he didn't say a word and merely shrugged his shoulders in disdainful silence. I hustled the General into my room and lectured him on the importance of being silent at a time like this, but he only laughed and said, "What's the matter with you? The Revolution is over, the Provisional Government has the situation well in hand and the rabble shall soon know its place again." What on earth are we to do with him? He must be obliged to keep quiet or else he'll be killed, as sure as Fate. The situation is anything but stable at the present time. The Provisional Government is compromising with the Soviet and who knows which will have the upper hand? Even though there is less shooting and more

talking in the streets one has the feeling that a tiny spark would start all the rumpus again. I shall positively ask the old dear not to come here any more unless he promises faithfully not to speak to anyone.

The Provisional Government has issued a new Manifesto that has created a great topic of discussion. The conservatives find it is too "red" while the reds, find it too conservative! As a result — endless arguments and talk, talk, talk.

Wednesday, March 8
(March 21)

Great excitement today. At 11 A.M. Prince V. arrived and went immediately to the Servants' Hall where the "Committee" was gravely awaiting him. He stayed there for nearly two hours, then came upstairs, accompanied by the President, the Vice President and the Secretary, all looking extremely important. In the background I caught a glimpse of Polia's face. In order to celebrate this occasion properly she was wearing the new dress the Matron had given her. The absurdity of this didn't seem to strike her and she was looking very dignified and foolish. Every time I see her trying to "save the Revolution" I have a wild desire to laugh. There certainly is always a funny side to all things! V. surrounded by the Praesidium of the Committee (Polia included) first talked to the Matron, then asked the Sisters to assemble, also the doctors, and a grand meeting was held. The Secretary of the Committee looking extremely defiant, and nervous, read aloud the resolution, concerning the arrest of the Matron and the

doctors. His face was violently red, his hands shook and he stumbled over the words helplessly as he read. Altogether he seemed perfectly wretched, having evidently discovered that to trot out one's innermost thoughts in public is a very questionable pleasure. 'Tis one thing to conspire with one's fellow workers, to make speeches and prance and behave like a splendid revolutionist in front of an admiring and sympathetic audience, consisting mostly of "Polias," but a totally different proposition to bring out one's views in the limelight of a critical and hostile crowd. Anyhow he hated it and so did the others. Only Polia in her new frock seemed to enjoy herself thoroughly, though from time to time she'd send the Matron an appealing glance, as if begging to be forgiven. The accusations in the Resolution were so unimportant and childlike that one positively felt embarrassed for the simple minds that had formulated them. Vague phrases about "too much strictness" in the Hospital, too monotonous menus, not sufficient leaves of absence, the names of several maids and orderlies "unjustly" dismissed or reprimanded — those were the main accusations against the rulers of the Hospital. It was amusing to study their faces: the Matron looked like a haughty and inscrutable image of stone, Dr. P. very sarcastic, and Dr. D. indignant. "Is that all?" asked Prince V. when Peter the Secretary finished reading. "That's all," he muttered, and sat down, apparently much relieved that his unpleasant task was over. "Well," resumed Prince V. turning to the Matron, "and how do *you* account for these cases of dismissals and reprimands, of strictness concerning leaves of

absence, of unsatisfactory menus? Will you please tell me? ” And tell him she did, concisely, clearly, in a very brilliant way, explaining every single accusation in the most convincing manner. The members of the Committee looked nonplussed at first, then started to yell, but V. raising his hand asked for silence. “Having now heard both sides,” he said, “I shall very carefully examine the situation, then as soon as I reach a decision I shall let you know. Leave the matter in my hands.” Then he closed the meeting and shaking hands impartially with both parties, made a very dignified exit. Excitedly arguing groups formed all over the auditorium after he left, but I rushed out so as to have time to pay the Parents a little visit before supper. There, I found everything as peaceful as ever, the old servants not having been affected by the Revolution in any way. They’re just the same — no committees, no “resolutions,” no nonsense, thank goodness.

Thursday, March 9
(March 22)

The latest news is that the Emperor has been arrested in Mohilev, the Empress having been arrested on the 21st in Tzarskoe. It appears that the Soviet demanded that the Provisional Government arrest them and, as usual, the Government had to give in. If only the children were not ill, the Imperial family could have escaped abroad. How I wish they could escape now! Isn’t *anyone* going to help them out? The General is frightfully upset by the news that his beloved Emperor is arrested. At first he was so furious we were afraid he’d have a stroke, but then, after

raging and storming, he broke down and cried like a child. Now he's going around with such a bewildered and hurt expression, that it makes one's heart ache for him. Young people can get enthusiastic over a Revolution, but for old people it's terrible. It's the end of the Regime they have known all their lives, and to see it destroyed is more than they can bear.

I simply have to study! How ever shall I pass my examinations, if I go on this way? Hospital work, night duty, operations, lectures, expeditions to see the Revolution, meetings, visits to the Parents, the excitement of rapidly changing events — where can one find time to study in all this? And now, on top of it all — our class is to be sent to the Kalinkine Hospital, as Doctor E. wants to conduct her lectures there, so as to be able to demonstrate her patients to the entire class. Then the Maternity Hospital too . . . how on earth are we to crowd all that into our lives! !

The Matron told me a funny story. Last night, when everything was quiet and everyone asleep, there was a little knock on her door (as usual she was working at her desk long past midnight), and there stood the President of the Committee looking very friendly and much abashed. In very much the same fashion as Polia he peered around to see that no one was following him, then locked the door as she had done, and tiptoed over to the Matron's desk. Then after a few preliminary discreet coughs and changings from one foot to another he told her very confidentially that he was extremely sorry to have been involved in the wretched business against her, as, personally,

he liked her very much and hoped that she'd always be the Matron of the Hospital, also that she could always rely on him as being her devoted "well-wisher." She told me he seemed so much in earnest, and so pathetically eager to be forgiven that she simply couldn't scold him, but shook his hand instead and told him that she understood everything perfectly. After that they had a long talk and parted the best of friends at half past two in the morning. However today when she met him in the corridor he looked as insolent as ever and never even touched his cap, probably because there were many people there at the time. Then again she saw him later for a few minutes alone and he was as polite and gentle as last night. Funny, but oh so comprehensible. What can one expect from a poor uneducated man, when some people of high station in life behave the way they do. For instance there was an article in the *Petrogradskaia Gazette*, where one of the Grand Dukes speaks of the Emperor and Empress in the most revolting way. Now that they are down, he, a member of their family, talks about them in a way a servant would be ashamed to speak of his masters and gives them the proverbial *coup de pied de l'âne*. Such things make my blood boil!

Nastinka is back from the Crimea and was allowed to return to the Palace. When asked by the authorities whether she was not afraid to be with the Empress at a dangerous time like this, she replied, "I shall certainly not leave her at this time." She and other members of the Imperial Suite were warned by General Korniloff that if they chose to stay in the Palace they would all be under

arrest. Nastinka, Isa, Mme. Narishkine, Miss Schneider, the Benckendorffs, Mr. Gilliard — have all chosen to stay!

Friday, March 10
(*March 23*)

I've been on duty by the bedside of Molchanoff, the tetanus patient. It's awful, and the strain of being with him has just tired me out. Muzzie came for tea and brought a very quiet and subdued General with her. Luckily I had his favourite muffins, so he had a good time after all.

Saturday, March 11
(*March 24*)

The Emperor returned to Tzarskoe yesterday and at last the poor family is re-united.

The Empress must be in despair: Rasputin's coffin has been opened by the soldiers, and his body taken out and burned on a pile of wood in Pargolovo forest. So, after all, his death and burial were not quite the end of his career. Like a vampire, his body had to be destroyed after he died, only instead of a stake thrust through his heart he was burned. They say, "fire purifies." If that is true may the burning of his body purify his ugly soul in the next world.

Monday, March 13
(*March 26*)

I haven't written for two days, as I didn't have a spare minute to write. Work in the operating room, lectures, and night duty — all that has kept me pretty busy. At 3 A.M. the tetanus case died, suffering greatly. Sister

Marie was there with him all the time, also our young woman doctor B. She is wonderfully good and kind to her patients and never leaves them when the end is near. We put his poor little belongings into a bag and wrote his wife. Altogether a miserable night.

Sunday I slept late, but was on time for dinner at home. Spent all afternoon with the Parents and went for a walk with Muzzie to the Summer Gardens and back. We met Prince O. and he walked home with us. We could only talk about one thing! What is to become of the Emperor and his family? The Soviet positively will not let them go to England or anywhere else abroad, and insists on keeping them under arrest, surrounded by an unusually large number of soldiers — to prevent them from escaping.

All this excitement is beginning to tell on the Parents. The General doesn't look well and Muzzie has two burning red spots on her cheeks. Of course they are terribly anxious for my brother Miki's safety — want him to go away and yet are afraid to let him go.

This evening the soldiers were much excited over the last decrees of the Soviet about the democratization of the army and the order to fraternize with the Germans at the front. Of course they seem to think it's splendid, though on the other hand I've seen some of the old soldiers look very sad, and even heard one of them say: "What, fraternize with the German after he made me lose my leg? No, indeed!" But the younger soldiers, mostly the slightly wounded, like Bogdanoff, made fun of him, calling him a "counter-revolutionist" and telling him to keep silent, which he did, though he had tears in his eyes and seemed

much upset. After all that talk they're very restless tonight and the ward is full of rustlings and deep sighs, that sound pathetic in the quiet of the night. It's strange how sometimes they seem to know things before they get into the papers. Very often they will speak of something as a fact, a day or two before it is officially announced, and then it comes true. I wonder how they do it? Usually facts when whispered from ear to ear become distorted, but here somehow they're nearly always right. It's queer! — About ten o'clock I went into the ward to have a look at Pavel. He was sleeping quietly, and so were the others, but in the corner bed occupied by Vlass (the one who had spoken up against fraternization) I heard a sort of choking sound and discovered him weeping bitterly, his face buried in his pillow. "What is it, Vlass?" I whispered, "are you suffering? Why didn't you ring for me?" He seemed unable to answer, so I knelt down by his bedside and held his hand. Gradually he stopped crying and gripped my hand in both of his. "It's awful, little Sister, awful, that we've got to fraternize with the Germans. Look what they did to me — to thousands, perhaps millions of others, and now it means that our fighting and our wounds and the misery of our lives in the trenches have been for nothing — all for nothing!" I did my best to comfort him and even tried to point out (may the Lord forgive me) that fraternization with the German soldiers, who did not want war any more than our soldiers did, was better than fighting. We talked in low tones for quite a long while, then seeing that he was getting calmer I gave him a sedative and soon he was sound asleep.

Tuesday, March 14
(March 27)

I didn't go out today, nor did I even have time to glance at the papers. Evidently nothing exciting has happened as the latest news always spreads like wildfire! Operation, lectures, and preparations for the examinations have filled my day and I'm dreadfully tired.

Wednesday, March 15
(March 28)

Spent the afternoon with the Parents. Found the General in a state of fury over a new manifesto of the Soviet addressed to "the People of the whole world." As we were having tea Mr. Nesvetsky came in and told us that he had met Papa this morning in the street car and had been scared to death, because the General, having discovered him, came and sat next to him and started immediately to air his opinions about this new declaration of the Soviet, as usual speaking at the very top of his voice. As people began to stare angrily, Mr. N. tapped his forehead significantly and said, addressing everyone and no one in particular, "Don't mind him, he's deaf and not all there!" Luckily they believed him and our poor old General's life was saved. But wouldn't he be furious if he knew what Mr. Nesvetsky had invented in order to save him? Poor darling, "not all there" when his mind is as bright as a new penny! . . . It seems a shame to say a thing like that even to protect him! . . . though, of course, that was the only thing to do! Mr. N. came to beg Muzzie not to let him go out alone and to persuade him

not to speak his thoughts out loud in public places. We decided then and there to tell him what Mr. N. said, but he got very angry, scolded us, told us that we didn't know what we were talking about and went to his room in a huff, slamming the door behind him. What can we invent to keep him quiet? He won't listen to anyone.

Sister S. came back from Tzarskoe Selo. She had been there during the Revolution and had much to tell. She said that the soldiers were constantly demanding to see Alexei and would insist on having him shown to them, several times a day, as a rumour had been spread that he had died. Once, in the very first days of the Revolution, while the Emperor was still at Mohilev, an enormous crowd of soldiers came to the Palace and threatened to break into the Empress's apartments, if she did not come out to speak to them. So she came out on the balcony, dressed in her Red Cross uniform. "They told me you wanted to see me," she said. "Why? I am only a mother nursing her sick children. Please do not disturb them, they are still very weak." She looked very ill herself as she stood there, facing the crowd, Sister S. said but held herself with great dignity and her simple words seemed to impress the mob favourably, for it dispersed without another word.

Thursday, March 16
(*March 29*)

The Sisters are getting ready for the election of their committee. Today there is going to be a general meeting with the Matron, as chairman. I won't be able to be present as our class is going to the Kalinkine Hospital for the lec-

ture. The General is sick: violent headache, very flushed, dizzy spells. The doctor is going to bleed him in the good old-fashioned way. He'll do it this evening while I am there. Muzzie seems worried.

Friday, March 17
(*March 30*)

The General's little operation was a great success. After the bleeding he went to sleep and slept splendidly all night. His face is no longer flushed, and the headache is gone. Those occasional bleedings certainly help him. He seemed so glad to see me last night and was delighted with the cake I brought him.

The elections went off very well too. The Matron was almost unanimously elected President, Sister Vera S. Vice President, and Sister Vera L. Secretary. It couldn't be better. Now perhaps life will be more normal and I'll be able to study in peace. I do want to pass those examinations with flying colours.

Monday, March 20
(*April 2*)

Yesterday I went with Sister Natalia to see the review of the troops in front of the Winter Palace. It went off all right, but was hardly worth seeing — no "revolutionary excitement," I mean. Only the red flags and the playing of the *Marseillaise* spoke eloquently of the great change that has taken place in the life of the country. The troops looked much as usual, and the sight was quite a tame one after what we've seen the last few weeks. However on the way home as we were coming down the Nevsky Prospect,

past the Nicholas Station, we saw crowds of soldiers that looked more like marauders than anything else. They were carrying bundles and bags of most unmilitary aspect, and their clothes were most extraordinary. They were making a lot of noise and of course busily spitting out the shells of sunflower seeds. "Where are you from?" asked Sister Natalia. "Are you on leave?" "On leave? That's a good one!" shouted the soldier she had spoken to. "We're not on leave, we're going home, that's all! They can go on fighting if they like without us, but we're through! Good-bye front!"

Is that the way the war is going to end, we wondered, as we walked on. Will desertion spread all over the front, and the Germans just walk over the border and invade Russia with no one to stop them? And what of the millions of men that gave their lives for their country? Was that all in vain? What future is in store for Russia, with her frontiers deserted and the whole Empire broken up into pieces, as undoubtedly will happen if autonomies are granted to those who are demanding them? If Ukrainia falls off, and the Crimea, and the Caucasus, and the former Khandoms of Kazan and Astrakhan and Siberia, not to mention Poland, Finland and the Baltic provinces — what will remain of Russia except Moscow and a few surrounding towns as it was in the Middle Ages?

Wednesday, March 22
(April 4)

Tomorrow Sister Natalia and I are going to see the burial of the "victims of the Revolution" on the Field of

Mars. They say that many of the "victims" became so decomposed by this time, that they had to be secretly buried in great haste, so that in the ceremonial coffins, instead of them, will be the bodies of homeless people who died recently in the various hospitals and have not been claimed by any relatives. As the coffins will be closed, any old Chinese laundryman can be taking the place of the real "victim" and buried with great pomp and ceremony. Our "younger personnel" is sending a deputation to the ceremony. I don't know who is going, but imagine that the "presidium" of the committee will be well represented.

Friday, March 24
(April 6)

Well, Sister Natalia and I witnessed yesterday the grand burial of more than two hundred "victims of the Revolution." The cold was horrible and I was frozen to the very marrow of my bones, even though I was tremendously bundled up. We started on foot very early in the morning and were immediately swallowed up by the crowds, all moving in the same direction. From all sides of the town endless processions were advancing bearing the red coffins of the victims, while bands played the mournful Revolutionary March "You fell victims of the fatal fight." As this was a strictly non-religious ceremony there were no priests nor Icons anywhere, only red and black banners displayed in great profusion. The processions observed great decorum and the faces of the participants were grave and dignified as though deeply im-

pressed with the significance of the occasion. It was strange to see such a quiet and orderly crowd and difficult to realize that it was composed of the very same people that had been howling and shooting and killing in a frenzy of destruction for the last few weeks. As we came to the Field of Mars the crowd was so enormous (later on we heard that there was more than a million people there) that for quite a while we couldn't get any further than its very outskirts. However, thanks to our uniforms and with the help of persuasive entreaties, energetic pushings and marchings with processions to which we did not belong — we finally worked our way out to a place from where we could see fairly well what was going on, even though we could not hear the speeches. An enormous grave, like a very long ditch, had been dug in the centre of the Field, while near it was a red platform built for the Important People (apparently even a Revolution does not do away with that category of human beings). From where we stood the sight was certainly an extraordinary one: the red coffins, the red platform, the sea of red and black banners, the tense and serious looking faces of the immense crowd — and above all the sound of the Fortress guns, that kept going at regular intervals. It was all very impressive in a horrible, nightmarish sort of way and we were quite relieved when a man with a great big nose began to speak and the crowd, eager to hear him, pushed us back where we should not see nor hear anything more. We had had enough, and started back half frozen and tired out. On the way to the Hospital I stopped at our house and ran up to see the Parents. When they heard where I had been all morning they

were thoroughly indignant and most unsympathetic when I told them how cold and tired I was. "Serves you right," said Muzzie severely, "the very idea of going to look at such horrible things! Shame on you!" She was really quite upset and wouldn't see my point of view: that it is most interesting to *see* a Revolution with one's own eyes and *hear* it with one's own ears. The General was furious too and as they simply wouldn't stop being angry I soon left them and trotted back to the Hospital in deep disgrace. However tomorrow afternoon I'm going out again with Sister Natalia — this time to a Revolutionary concert (everything is "Revolutionary" nowadays) given by the Volynsky Regiment at the Marie Theatre. They say the Provisional Government will be there, and also the former political exiles. That will be interesting!

Saturday, March 25
(April 7)

I'm just back from the concert and simply must write down at once all my impressions. The theatre looked so strange and dingy, like the ghost of its former self: dust all over the place (fleas too — to judge by the way we were bitten), red flags draped over the Imperial eagles and crowns, and the most extraordinary public! I never saw a bunch of shabbier looking people at a theatre in all my life (even the "Kapeldieners" were no longer dressed in their uniforms) and, of course, soldiers in quantities everywhere. In the great Imperial box in the centre of the horseshoe sat all the former exiles: Vera Figner, Vera Zasoulitch, Morozov, and many others whom I did

not recognize. I couldn't help staring at them, and wondering how it felt to be suddenly free after years of imprisonment. Were they happy now that their dreams of a new, emancipated Russia had come true, and they realized that they had not suffered in vain — or had they been tortured for so long that it was impossible for them to be happy any more? Someone told me that one of them (Lopatin, I think, though I am not sure) had even forgotten how to speak, after being for forty years in solitary confinement. Somehow I had pictured them very differently. Vera Figner, for instance: I had always thought of her as being tall and beautiful, with great glowing eyes full of mystic fire and fanaticism. Instead of that, here she was, where I could see her "with my own eyes" just a little old lady very quiet, gentle and tired, oh so tired looking!

The members of the Provisional Government sat in the box to the right of the stage, the foreign diplomats to the left. On the stage itself was the Volynsky Regiment with its orchestra that started the concert with the *Marseillaise* (everything starts with the *Marseillaise* now) while the audience stood up. When that was over there were wild cries of "long live the Revolution!" that fairly rocked the house. A woman in front of us fainted and was carried out, while on all sides the cries became more and more hysterical until one felt one could stand them no longer. Wild glittering eyes, open mouths, congested faces, women's hats and hair awry, men's collars torn open — and those wild cries mounting higher and higher on the ever rising scales of swiftly increasing hysteria. On my

left a girl began to sob loudly but Sister Natalia bending over me, towards her, shouted: "Stop that at once, or I'll shake you!" And the girl instantly obeyed and pulled herself together. Behind us was an individual, busy eating sunflower seeds when the cries began. Well he got so excited that he started spitting out the shells with the rapidity of a machine gun right in the backs of our chairs, hitting our necks and even landing on our heads. "Now *you* stop *that*," shouted Sister Natalia, wheeling around and glaring at him so fiercely that he too obeyed her, though we heard him grumble that he was a free man in a free country and didn't see why he should be bothered by any "counter-revolutionists." "Counter-revolutionist yourself!" retorted Sister Natalia still more fiercely — "If you're a free man I'm a free woman and I won't have you spitting at my head the filthy way you did — *that's* counter-revolution if ever there was any." That argument proved very effective and silenced him completely but started me giggling uncontrollably. "Now what's the matter with *you*?" demanded Sister Natalia severely. "If you don't stop that!" . . . but at that moment the Minister of Justice Kerensky appeared on the stage and everybody calmed down. He's an ugly, thin, pale, nervous looking man with a perfectly marvellous faculty for speaking. He made a magnificent speech, very revolutionary and yet very patriotic, working himself into such an oratorical frenzy that I would not have been surprised had he fallen down in an epileptic fit. Something about him made me think of Napoleon. When I mentioned that later I was told that he thinks he *is* a reincarnation of

Napoleon, and imitates him as much as he can. His speech simply brought down the house and again we had a spell of frantic yelling that lasted quite a long time. During the interval we went out and watched the people's faces and listened to what was being said. Everyone was speaking of Kerensky and without any doubt he is the idol of the hour.

After the intermission Vera Figner came on the stage and spoke very quietly, with a great deal of reserve, but very forcibly. She spoke of all those Pioneers of the Revolution that had given their lives for the freedom of their country. Clearly, distinctly, she pronounced their names and, as she did, I pictured to myself a long procession of ghosts slowly coming out of the far away prisons of Siberia — white forms treading softly over the endless plains of snow, floating like mist above the town, entering the theatre unseen and surrounding the grey-haired martyr that had evoked their spirits.

Both Kerensky and Vera Figner impressed me tremendously, though in a totally different way. He is so brilliant, such a marvellous orator, so full of fire and tremendous nervous energy, whereas she, on the contrary, is quiet, reserved, tired, sad and yet to my idea by far the stronger of the two. His words appealed to my *emotions*: I wanted to get up and do something heroic, dangerous, in a spectacular sort of way, for being a fanatic himself he inspires his listeners and makes them fanatics too. *Her* words appealed to my *soul*. . . . In her quiet way, everything she said seemed to strike an answering cord deep down in my very innermost being, — my better self, not the superficial one

that wanted to perform some spectacular deed of valour for everyone to see and admire. No! She made one yearn for unseen, unknown, unappreciated self-sacrifice, for suffering in the name of all that is good and true, for self-abnegation, devotion and love, in the name of Christ. I do not even know whether she is a believer or not, probably not, but that is the way she made me feel. I turned to speak to Sister Natalia and saw that she had tears in her eyes. "That's the real thing," she murmured, "the real thing — and that's the stuff martyrs are made of!" Everyone seemed deeply impressed and I saw that many felt the way we did. When the next orator came and spoke, well as any street corner, soap-box haranguer would speak, it was an awful anti-climax and we were sorry we had stayed. But we remained to the very end and left the Marie Theatre only after all the ovations and demonstrations were thoroughly over. I couldn't see the Parents today, but shall spend tomorrow evening with them. After vespers Muzzie called me up and said that they had had a particularly beautiful service in their Church tonight. I wish I could have been with them, but I had to be in our own Hospital Church with all the other students.

Saturday, March 25?⁵

(April 7)?

The whole town is talking about a very mysterious and strange incident. It appears that a sealed sleeping-car has arrived in Petrograd containing three ultra-revolutionary individuals or "Bolsheviks" as they called themselves.

⁵ There was no date in the Diary above this entry.

Political exiles of the old regime, they lived in Zimmerwald, Switzerland, until the Revolution broke out when all exiles were permitted to re-enter the country. However as these individuals are such rabid revolutionists the German Government would not allow them to pass through Germany unless they travelled in a sleeping-car that had been sealed before entering old *Deutschland* and unsealed only after leaving it. So that's the way they journeyed, arriving all locked up into Petrograd station where the seals were broken and the dangerous creatures let out. Whether it's true or not — that's the story that is being told all over town and has created endless comments and arguments. Some say it's all a lie, an invention of sensation-mongers, others that they've seen the "sealed" car with their very own eyes, while a third group knows that it's a sort of "Trojan horse" trick of the German Government, who has sent three arch-spies to find out the real situation in Russia. A fourth group however is sure that the "men of mystery" have arrived with a guillotine, being specialists in that particular line of work, and that soon all our heads will be chopped off. As everyone tells a different story and sticks to it stubbornly, the confusion is great and our poor minds in a whirl. I suggested to Sister Natalia, "Let's go and have a look at that car," but she doesn't believe it exists, and the Matron won't let me go alone. I am dreadfully disappointed, as I'm sure it's there. I have heard that the chief man of mystery, the arch-bolshevik called Lenin has chosen Kzeczinska's Palace to live in and calmly moved into it an hour after his arrival.

Three of our convalescing soldiers have left the Hospi-

tal for good today without asking permission or even saying good-bye. Evidently the orderlies helped them to get their things and escape. It's no use talking of discipline or trying to enforce it, for there is none anywhere. Routine helps to keep the Hospital going, but even that is breaking down a little more every day. It angers me so to see some of the "red" Sisters and probationers break discipline in many nasty little ways — just because they know there is no real authority over them. However there is only a small group of them; the majority behaves splendidly and works harder than ever.

*Russian Palm Sunday, March 26
(April 8)*

The Passion week is beginning and I am preparing to make my Devotions. Somehow, this year, the Devotions seem to be particularly significant and necessary — at least that's the way I feel. After all the excitement we've been through, the peaceful and quiet Services are very soothing. Best of all I love the evening Services, when the Church is dark, save for the little red and blue lampadas and the flickering light of the candles in front of the Holy Icons.

The Emperor and Empress have been separated by the Government and made to live in different apartments, not even being allowed to see each other. It seems such an unnecessary cruelty!

*Monday, March 27
(April 9)*

I went to Church very early this morning, then worked in the operating room. After dinner the Matron told me that Prince V. had sent for her and the doctors, also for the

executive members of the "Kitchen Committee" and talked to them all most tactfully. He praised the Watchman and the Doorman for their Revolutionary ardour, but wondered whether it would not be a good plan to arrange a compromise in view of the distinguished services, for the "benefit of Mankind," of both doctors and Matron. "Especially now, as both sides have committees and legal representatives," he said, "don't you think you might find a way of working harmoniously together in your various spheres of activities?" And so on and so forth. As a result of his most tactful peroration the accusers decided to withdraw their accusations against the Hospital chiefs, who in their turn promised to see that the menus would be more satisfactory — the leaves of absence more frequent and the reprimands and dismissals less severe and drastic. Then they all shook hands, and apparently that incident is closed, thank goodness!

This evening after Vespers I talked to our old Father Pafnuty. He told me that a friend of his, the priest of the St. Serge Cathedral, and several other priests had said prayers over the graves of the victims of the Revolution by order of the Provisional Government. It appears that there had been a lot of dissatisfaction and grumbling among the people that the "victims" had been buried without any prayers, "like dogs," and in order to pacify the grumblers several priests had been sent to read the funeral prayers over the graves. That's the way it goes: one day, carried away by revolutionary ardour they bury their heroes without any religious ceremonies, then they get frightened and send for the priests!

When I went over to see the Parents I found the

General, as usual, furious with everything that was happening. His only consolation is that America has joined the Allies, but even so he mourns that she came in too late. "Had she joined us sooner we never would have had this Revolution," he lamented.

Tuesday, March 28
(April 10)

As far as I can see the Revolution has not yet affected the religious fervour of our free citizens. All the Churches are full and our most rabid revolutionists in the Hospital attend the Passion services devoutly. These days seem pretty peaceful and at last I am able to study. Sister S. went back to Tzarskoe for a day and says that all is quiet there too. She has heard that the Empress has quite given way under the terrific strain of all that has happened and is unable to walk. The children are all right now, and getting stronger. While they were ill, for quite a long time, the truth was kept from them, and only when they got better were they told that their father had abdicated and was no longer Emperor.

Wednesday, March 29
(April 11)

No time to write today. Muzzie just telephoned that the General wants me to come over and hear him read the "Akafist" before Confession. Oh dear — his reading always puts me to sleep! Then I suppose he'll write down the list of his sins and lose it as he did last year. What a fuss that was: he so upset, poor darling and everybody in the house scrambling all over the place hunting frantically

for that list of sins. Finally he found it in the pocket of his old jacket! I'll never forget how foolishly hilarious that incident made me and how suddenly remembering it I burst out laughing right in the midst of Confession, to the amazement of the Priest.

I'm going to "beg everyone's pardon" for my sins now, then run over to hear the "*Akafist*," then have supper and go to Confession.

Thursday, March 30
(*April 12*)

We all had Communion together. The General seemed quite shaky and Muzzie cried a lot. I'm so glad I could spend the afternoon with them and go to the reading of the "Twelve Gospels," as tomorrow I shall not be able to see them, having to work all day.

Saturday, April 1
(*April 14*)

Today is Muzzie's Namesday and I gave her the aquamarine pendant she had so much admired at Fabergé,⁶ and her favourite flowers. She was dressed in one of her prettiest dresses—the silver grey velvet—and looked perfectly beautiful. But there was something so pathetic about her eyes and their expression hurt me and made me want to cry—I don't know why! For the midnight Easter Service I'll be in our Hospital Church, but immediately afterwards shall run over to the Parents and break the fast with them.

⁶ The Court jewelers.

Russian Easter Sunday, April 2
(April 15)

I joined the Parents after the midnight service and was just in time for the Pascal breakfast. As Easter gifts I gave Muzzie the pearl and diamond egg and the General the silver egg with the painted icon of our Savior inside. They seemed to like the eggs and gave me some lovely presents. Muzzie a turquoise ring and two ruby and diamond brooches made out of great grandmother's court dress buttons — the General, a large flowering lilac bush and a beautifully bound prayer book. Aunt Paskevitch sent me a crystal scent bottle with a gold top and my monogram in diamonds. We all tried to be merry at the feast but somehow we couldn't. The General started to speak of the Emperor and nearly broke down, while Muzzie seemed preoccupied and sad even though she did her best to talk and seem gay.

Monday, April 3
(April 16)

Now processions have become the fashion. Everywhere one sees them marching along — all bound for the Tauride Palace carrying banners with inscriptions that describe more or less the opinions and desires of those that carry them. March, march, march, that's what everyone is doing after having talked themselves hoarse. First talk, then march! What next?

Saturday, April 8
(April 21)

If the Soviet is full of talkers howling for a "Republic and Peace" this man Lenin beats them all. His speeches

attract considerable attention and delight the hearts of "the People." "Take the land from the landowners, the factories from their owners, capital from the capitalists" he says and his words are like fire brands thrown in the midst of barrels of gunpowder. To take the land from the landowners — why that is the dream of every peasant just as every workman probably longs to own the factory he is employed in, and Lenin's words are the very words they all understand best. At first when the crowds did not quite grasp what he was talking about, they laughed at him and made fun of his speeches, but now they're becoming enthusiastic, and his popularity is growing every day. Though he advocates peace without annexations and contributions, he has himself annexed Kzeczinskaia's Palace and is living there most comfortably. Occasionally he appears on the balcony and starts one of his famous speeches that attract thousands. I've been there twice and am very much interested in him. He is bald, terribly ugly, wears a rumpled old brown suit, speaks without any oratorical fire, more like a college professor calmly delivering his daily lecture in a quiet unexcited way — not for a minute would one think of him as being a demagogue — yet *what* he says drives the people crazy. Truly a remarkable individual and oh, so unlike the usual revolutionary orator that waves his arms and shouts, foaming at the mouth, on the verge of a hysterical fit. No, positively it is not the *way* this man speaks but *what* he says that electrifies his listeners more than any other orator that I have heard — even more than Kerensky himself with all his splendid eloquence. Despite his quiet professorial manner one feels

that Lenin is a man of tremendous energy and power and I am wondering what the future holds for him.

Monday, April 10
(April 23)

I have a beastly cold and cannot go out. It's maddening, for Sister Natalia went to the Finland station yesterday to see the arrival of a lot of new political exiles, and I couldn't go with her. She said it turned out to be a dismal affair and the poor exiles looked bewildered and lost. Nevertheless I'm disgusted with myself for not having been able to go. There is much talk about the "Constituent Assembly" and where it is to be held. Some think it should be here, while others say that Moscow is the only place for it. The "Constituent Assembly," "Peace without annexations or contributions," Lenin and the arrival of the French socialist deputies are the topics of the day. But with the examinations so close at hand *my* topics are mostly centred on Anatomy, Surgery, etc. With all this excitement and study I have become so thin I look like a scarecrow.

Olga, my sister, came over for tea today. She was very enthusiastic over Kerensky, believes he is Russia's great man, destined to save the country. She has decided to take her boy and go to the country soon. It hardly seems a safe thing to do. The Parents would like to go to Troitskoe this summer, but I wonder if they'll be able to. All depends on the strength of the Provisional Government. If it succeeds in being the one and only authority until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, then life will be peaceful

and safe, but if the Soviet gets the upper hand and this man Lenin becomes more popular and powerful I am afraid the country will be a pretty dangerous place for any one to live in. I told that to the General the other day, but he got very angry with me and shouted that I didn't know what I was talking about. Time will show. Already the papers report agrarian disorders not so far from Orel either.

Wednesday, April 12
(April 25)

My cold is better and I went out for the first time today. The streets are revolting — full of soldiers that have deserted the front and are supposedly on their way home, though they seem to be taking it easy and having a thoroughly good time right here. They look horrible. They've let their hair grow, and wear it hanging over their foreheads in long, dirty, unkempt locks — they're unshaven, unwashed, and their clothes are the most slovenly things I've ever seen. They seem to glory in their appearance and do everything they can not to look like the soldier of the "old regime." With their caps set at a jaunty angle 'way back on their heads, their coats unbuttoned and soiled, the insolent expression of their faces, their loud coarse shouts and the eternal spitting of sunflower seeds, they present a sorry spectacle indeed. Their great sport is to hang in clusters outside the street cars, and I simply cannot describe how repulsive they look hanging there with their open coats flying behind them like wide-spread dirty wings when the cars are in motion. I saw a soldier push a very old woman off the steps of a car, push her so

roughly that she fell back in the snow, while he took her place amid the loud cheers and laughter of his companions — it made me sick. Our Hospital soldiers are trying their best to imitate those brutes. They refuse to wash and shave, wear their clothes the same slovenly way and spit sunflower seeds all over the place. Of course nearly all have girls hanging on their arms and many carry harmonicas that they play loudly as they go.

Friday, April 14

(April 27)

I must write down something amusing: Polia told me that there was a meeting last night (didn't I hear it?) — and that *I* had been the topic of discussion. There had been a suggestion to arrest me and have me put out of the Hospital on account of my title, but the majority had protested, saying that I had worked hard for nearly three years and had done a lot financially for the wounded besides. They even calculated, she said, how much I had spent on presents for the several hundred wounded soldiers at each Christmas and Easter-tide, and came to the conclusion that I had done well. So they've decided to overlook my title and leave me in peace. I'm glad of that, as I'd hate to give up my examinations and hospital work when I've studied so hard.

Saturday, April 15

(April 28)

I saw the General today and all he could talk about was the "Red Guard" that now replaces the old police. That

Red Guard annoys him as much as a red rag irritates a bull, but at the same time fascinates him in the way something horrible can fascinate one. When he sees a red guardsman he walks around him in circles, stares at him, watches every move he does, then murmurs "*dourak*," and walks off in search of another. It's funny, and yet terrifying for he might some day say something rude out loud to the Red Man who'd probably shoot him then and there as an old "counter-revolutionist." It's a wonder he has not been arrested so far. Evidently his Guardian Angel is watching over him or our Lady of Kazan whom he worships so devoutly.

Wednesday, April 19
(May 2)

Yesterday was the first of May, according to the new calendar, and there was a grand demonstration of the workers at the Field of Mars. I had no time to go. Sister Natalia was busy too — but some of the other Sisters went and told me all about it. Enormous crowds, they said, red flags, red platforms, numerous bands and speeches, speeches, speeches! It evidently was not as exciting as the burial of the victims of the Revolution and I am not sorry that I could not go. Having seen one parade one has seen them all, for they're monotonously alike. Besides my cold is worse again, my head aches and my studies drive me wild.

Tonight there's another Revolutionary Concert, at the Theatre Michel this time, and Kerensky is going to speak again. I wish I could go to that but won't be able. Sister

Natalia and Sister Vera are going though, and that means I'll have a good description of the proceedings.

Saturday, April 22

(May 5)

The town is quiet now but for two days there has been rioting in the streets again on account of an argument between the Soviet and the Provisional Government. The Soviet does not want Miliukov in the Government, and cries of "down with Miliukov" started all the fuss. The General is chuckling as he always detested Miliukov and seems to think it's a good joke on him. However the Provisional Government has not given in this time and apparently has the upper hand for a change.

Monday, April 24

(May 7)

No more lectures, no more Hospital work, we're free to study all the time for our examinations. I shall probably be too busy to write in this diary for a long time now, unless something very unusual happens.

Monday, May 1

(May 14)

No time to write in detail, but I simply must jot down a few joyful and mournful facts. Have passed Anatomy and Physiology with flying colours, — got honours for Surgical work and Children's Hygiene and lovely compliments from Professor Bobin for Eye diseases in addition to the highest mark. So far good, but . . . nearly failed

in Pharmacology, having completely forgotten a formula that I never would have remembered had not my neighbour at the examination table, Miss Schapiro, pretended to drop a pencil and whispered the formula as she bent down under the table to pick the pencil up. Lovely girl — I hope I can do something for her in return some day! If she had not done that I would have failed miserably, as I didn't seem to be sure of anything the Professor asked me and, had I disgraced myself over the formula, he never would have allowed me to pass. As it is he gave me the lowest mark that just barely let me scramble through. Massage was pretty bad too. I had to demonstrate on a huge ill-tempered woman, who complained she hardly felt my hands, though I was putting all my strength into the wearisome process of mauling her and the perspiration just poured down my face. "Not much of an exhibition our Countess has shown us," remarked the massage teacher acidly, specially stressing the words "our Countess." She's a Bolshevik and openly admits that she hates titles and people that have them, though I argue with her fiercely that her political prejudices shouldn't interfere with her sense of fairness where work is concerned. I really did much better than Barbara B. and yet she gave her a higher mark than mine. Oh well — massage isn't interesting anyhow ("sour grapes" I suppose, to be really honest with myself!). Two girls have failed in all their examinations so far, so I should be happy that I am luckier than they and really have done quite well in the first three. Demonstrating a complicated surgical dressing however, I dropped the bandage and it went rolling off the platform

down into the centre aisle of the auditorium. The students giggled and Professor Isachenko was quite sarcastic about my clumsiness though he didn't let it affect the mark he gave me. Old Professor Rutkovsky was very complimentary when I finished telling him all I knew about Children's Hygiene. "You have nobly upheld your dignity of Countess," he said, bowing in stately fashion from the waist, while I silently bowed in grateful return and again he bowed and again I bowed and everything was simply lovely. It's too funny: one professor uses "Countess" as a sarcasm — the other as a compliment! Now I am working hard for the "Kalinkine" hospital examination. We are to go there and diagnose the different phases of the disease. As I know that subject very well I feel quite hopeful.

Sunday, May 7
(May 20)

The examinations are progressing favourably. High marks for laboratory work and obstetrics. Middling for ear, nose and throat and contagious diseases, barely climbed over the fence for skin diseases.

Wednesday, May 10
(May 23)

The Kalinkine hospital examination went off beautifully. The first patient I drew had the most perfect "plaques opalines" and as I knew the subject thoroughly I lectured happily for a few minutes on the platform with the patient by my side. The other two patients were easy

too and I made all my diagnoses correctly rejoicing thereby the heart of Professor Elzine, who was very pleased with me and told me a lot of nice things right in front of everybody. That examination was really my triumph and the success has made me ever so happy.

Politically there have been some changes. Miliukoff and Goutchkoff have resigned and there is going to be a Coalition between the Provisional Government and the Soviet, Tseretelli, Tchernoff and Skobeleff representing the Soviet in the government. Kerensky is now speaking of enforcing strict discipline at the front. I wonder how he'll do it. First discipline was destroyed, now they want it back again!

Saturday, May 13
(*May 26*)

It's all over! I've passed successfully and can at last rest. Next week we're going to the country — the General, Muzzie and I. These days our class is celebrating and we have a full program of things to do. Who said there ever was a Revolution?

Tuesday, May 16
(*May 29*)

We cannot go to the country after all. The peasants are in a very hostile and dangerous frame of mind and agrarian disorders are spreading like wild-fire. Several estates have been completely destroyed. As usual in such cases the peasants burn the houses, cut down the woods and even kill the cattle, which is such an idiotic thing to do as they could keep the animals for their own use. Muz-

zie wants to get the Library safely out of Troitskoe. She is thinking seriously of donating it to the University of Saratoff for two reasons: first she has an estate there and secondly the University is young and poor and therefore would appreciate the books more than the older and richer universities that have wonderful libraries of their own. It will be painful to part with our old Library, but it seems to be the only way of saving it. For some reason the peasants like to destroy the libraries of the great land-owners and nearly always burn them separately in huge bonfires or else tear them up book by book and scatter the pages all over the roads for miles around. Muzzie has asked me to write to the Dean of the University and offer him the Library — more than 25,000 books collected by my great-grandfather Skariatine and my grandfather Lobanov-Rostovsky.

Friday, May 19
(June 1)

I've written the letter about the Library and sent it off. Instead of going to Troitskoe we have decided to rent a house for the summer in Tzarskoe Selo. Tomorrow Muzzie and I are going there to look at one that has been highly recommended.

We have heard that the Dowager Empress and the Grand Duchess Xenia are having much trouble in the Crimea. Sailors come constantly to Ai Todor where they are living together and search the place over and over again. They mostly arrive in the middle of the night and oblige everyone to get up while they ransack every room.

from cellar to attic. Poor Empress, what an experience to live through at her age!

The efforts of Kerensky to stimulate the soldiers at the Front seem hopeless. The lack of discipline brought about by that wretched "Prikaz no. 1," the German propaganda and that of the Bolsheviks — all this taken together has completely demoralized the soldiers! They do not see why they should remain at the Front, and desert in droves, while those that remain kill their own officers and fraternize with the Germans. Thus the frontiers are practically open and really there is nothing to prevent the Germans from entering Russia without the slightest opposition — if they should want to!

Sunday, May 21
(*June 3*)

We spent the afternoon in Tzarskoe yesterday and had altogether a horrid day. The train was an hour late starting and so overcrowded with soldiers that we had to stand all the way down. Not one man dreamt of offering Muzzie a seat and I was afraid she'd faint from exhaustion and the horrible smell on the train, as all the soldiers were smoking the vilest tobacco — eating garlic sausage and simply reeking of perspiration and leather boots. Though it was a warm day all the windows were closed and we felt thoroughly sick. On arriving at Tzarskoe station we found a dilapidated old cab into which we climbed, telling the man to drive us to the Datcha Frederitze that we had been told was one of the nicest houses for rent. After driving around, in what seemed to us an aimless sort of

way, the man suddenly stopped his old horse near the iron railing of the Alexander Palace, where a group of people were standing and jeering at something in the park. "What is it?" we asked, but to our astonishment the driver had clambered on to his seat and begun to yell frantically the vilest insults at the top of his voice, at the same time cracking his whip and jumping up and down in a perfect frenzy of rage. Amazed we stared at the creature, not understanding what, all of a sudden, had happened to him, gazing horror-stricken at his convulsed face, popping eyes and wild antics. But all around us, on all sides we saw the same contorted faces and heard the same insulting howls. "What is it?" I asked a woman standing nearest to the cab — "What is everyone looking at? Whom are they shouting at?" "*Gosoudar* the Emperor," she whispered, her eyes full of misery and the tears just pouring down her cheeks. "See him over there, our holy martyr," and she pointed towards a small man in the distance who seemed to be digging in a flower bed, his back bent, his face averted. "Every day he works there," the woman continued, "and every day the crowds come to look and jeer at him." I suddenly felt faint and dizzy, for a minute I thought I would faint — then with a strong revulsion of feeling a powerful wave of fury swept over me. Never in all my life have I felt that way and never do I hope to feel like it again. "Sit down and go this minute," I cried to the driver, and strangely enough he immediately climbed off his seat, sat down and gathering the reins started his old horse off at a weak canter. I fully expected him to turn round and yell insults

at me, but he didn't say a word and drove us in silence to the Datacha Frederitze.

We've decided to take the villa. It's in good condition and has plenty of room. The return trip was a little better as the train was not as crowded and I found a seat for Muzzie by an open window. We hope to move in a week.

Sunday, May 28
(*June 10*)

We're leaving today for Tzarskoe bag and baggage, though without the General, who doesn't want to leave town yet.

Monday, May 29
(*June 11*)

Here we are, back in town again, after a mystifying experience! Yesterday we left for Tzarskoe and arrived at the villa in time for dinner, the cook and other servants having gone several hours ahead. After arranging our rooms with our own personal things and making them look as homelike as possible we had dinner, then went out into the garden. It was getting dark and we were thinking of going back into the house when suddenly, goodness knows where from, appeared the figure of a man dressed in a khaki shirt and wearing a soldier's cap. "Who are you?" I asked, but the man without answering came up close and stared at us for a few seconds in silence. "Well, what is it?" I asked again while Muzzie nervously clutched my hand murmuring: "*Laisse-le tranquille et allons à la maison.*" The man burst out laughing. "What is she saying, afraid of me, is she?" he asked, jerking his thumb

at Muzzie. "Well, old lady, you needn't be, for I won't hurt you. On the contrary, I've come to save your life because I'm a good fellow and sorry for you. Respect for your grey hair and all that, you know." He certainly looked all right to me, with my newly acquired experience of various types of revolutionary individuals. I could see his face quite plainly. It was round and healthy, a typical young peasant's face with fair hair, blue eyes, and a kindly smile. "It's like this," he said, coming closer and speaking very softly. "Your lives are not safe here tonight. This house is going to be destroyed and everyone in it killed. Now listen to me; go right back to Petrograd and take every living soul along with you, hear me? Tomorrow you'll find out that the Datcha Frederitze has been burned down to the ground. But I'm a God-fearing fellow and sorry for the old lady — that's why I'm warning you! And now good-bye and go — go as quickly as you can!" Whereupon he disappeared as rapidly and mysteriously as he had appeared. We stared at each other aghast. What did it mean, and what were we to do? Muzzie was trembling all over, her lovely eyes wide open with terror. "Let us go immediately," she whispered. "Come, we'll tell the servants and pack." So back into the house we went, not hurrying too much as we thought the man might be watching us and we didn't want him to think that he had frightened us. I told the news to Tatiana, who rushed off to warn the other servants to get ready to leave at once. We simply threw our things into the suitcases — alas for all the trouble we had taken to arrange everything a few hours previously. About ten o'clock we were ready and on

our way to the station in the same dilapidated old drosky that had brought us to the villa on our first trip. The driver looked at us very queerly, I thought, and as I paid him he growled something under his breath about "no use coming back where you're not wanted." I pretended not to hear his pleasant send-off and he drove away slowly looking back over his shoulder with a horrid sneer on his face. The strange coincidence of having *him* drive us to the station when there were plenty of other cabs around, made me think that perhaps he was back of all this fresh trouble — to punish us for our attitude towards him that afternoon when he was shouting insults at the Emperor. It seems very probable.

Peter has gone to Tzarskoe today to investigate whether the villa has been destroyed or not.

Late that same evening

Well, the whole thing is a puzzle! Peter came back saying that the villa had not been touched and that everything seemed very peaceful around the place. Now we're trying to solve the problem: did the man who warned us really save our lives, the villa having been spared because we had left it or did he play a trick on us in order to frighten us away? So far we cannot make it out. We have decided to stay in town for three days and then return to Tzarskoe as we won't be kept away by such performances.

Tuesday, May 30

(June 12)

I was arrested this morning and marched to jail between two red guardsmen! It happened this way: As I was

standing in the street, reading a new "proclamation" of the Government, that had just been pasted onto the wall, a woman came up beside me and started to read too. "Oh my Lord!" she said suddenly turning to me. "What do you think of all this?" (it had to do with news of the front). "Is it a pack of lies again or not? Where is the truth nowadays, can you tell me?" "The truth is right here," I answered, gravely tapping the proclamation with my forefinger. I didn't like the looks of the woman and didn't want to be drawn into any kind of discussion with her. However I had barely spoken when, to my dismay, down came the proclamation with a great rustle of paper right onto our heads, evidently having been displaced by the poke I had given it with my finger. Instantly the woman began to shriek at the top of her voice, "Help, help — there's a counter-revolution here! The Government's proclamation has been torn down — save the Revolution," at the same time she grabbed my arm and hung on to it with the fury of a wild-cat. Before I could do or say anything two burly red guardsmen were on either side of me, eyes glaring, revolvers drawn. It was all so absurdly ridiculous I couldn't help laughing, which made them all the more furious. "You'll laugh in jail all right," they shouted angrily. "Just wait! As for you, citizeness," they said turning towards the woman, "you've proved yourself to be a worthy comrade. Follow us and you'll get your revolutionary reward." So off we started; the two red guardsmen and myself abreast, I in the middle of course, the woman behind. Just as we were going around the corner we met Peter and Sophie M. who stared in

amazement at me and my strange companions, they stopped, turned around and started to follow us. Presently a group of small boys joined us, then some passers-by, so that we were quite a little crowd when we finally arrived at the former Ouchastok or police quarters, that are now being used by the red guardsmen as the district court room and jail. My followers were ordered to remain outside, while I was ushered into a large, dirty room with long wooden benches around the walls. Here my two capturers turned me over to another red guardsman, who was evidently in charge of the room, and after some whispering disappeared taking the woman along with them. The jailer ordered me to sit down between an enormously fat, puffing woman, with a basket of vegetables in her lap, and a rather wild looking man who was glaring at everyone from beneath bushy eyebrows and muttering imprecations under his breath. Besides being so fat and unpleasant to behold the woman and her vegetables smelled horridly, so that to forget her I began to look around the room at the other people seated on the benches. Suddenly I discovered Princess T. sitting right opposite me. She seemed quite cheerful and we looked at each other in amusement though prudently we made no signs of recognition. Presently some more "prisoners" were brought in and ordered to sit down despite the fact that all the benches were crowded. So they stood huddled by the door, a dejected little group of very respectable looking older people, who didn't seem to find the experience funny at all. After a while the fat woman on my right fished out of her basket a piece of black bread and an enormous onion that she proceeded to eat

with great relish, while the man on my left glared at her in silent fury. Finally, not being able to contain himself any longer, he started to give utterance to his anger and disgust much to my delight as, of course, all my sympathies were on his side. "Madam," he croaked hoarsely, "Madam, isn't the situation bad enough without having you eat an onion here?" "I do not speak to unknown men," answered she with great dignity fishing out another onion and biting into it with even greater gusto, while my eyes watered and the man groaned as in pain. Suddenly he jumped up, snatched the onion out of her hand, threw it across the room barely missing Princess T.'s head and with a sort of war-whoop overturned the whole basket scattering all kinds of vegetables in every direction. "Thief, murderer," screamed the woman furiously waving her arms and choking with rage, her hair coming down her back and her dress bursting open under her arm, as the fastenings gave way with ominous little snaps. "Stop it," roared the red guardsman, "stop it or I'll shoot you all — yes, every one of you, daring to make such a shameful noise here," the whole room being in an uproar of delight at the fight between my two neighbours. Only a little group of older people looked frightened and huddled closer together. At the shouts of the red guardsman the noise ceased and everyone was quiet, though the man continued to swear softly under his breath about onions, and the woman went on puffing like a steam engine. Once she tried to pick her vegetables up but our jailer roared at her so violently that she bounced back to her seat and never moved again. Meanwhile the room was getting hotter and

smellier every minute, as all the windows were tightly closed and the stench of unwashed humanity blended evilly with the odour of onions and other vegetables. I was beginning to feel really sick and dizzy when we heard a stir in the next room and another red guardsman hurried in to announce that the revolutionary judges had arrived and that we were to be brought in, not in alphabetic order but in the order of our respective captures. My heart sank — the room had been full when I was brought in! This would be even worse than alphabetic order, though my letter was K! However in a minute my hopes rose again as I heard my name mentioned together with Princess T.'s. "The two most insolent counter-revolutionists are to be questioned first: Irina K. and Sofia T.," yelled the red guardsman, poking his head through the door, while our own jailer motioned me to get up, which I did with great alacrity, overjoyed to be, after all, the very first to enter the court room. Everything was done in great style; the jailer handed me over to the red guardsman of the court room, who in his turn passed me along to the two men that had captured me (while apparently I was so busy tearing down the proclamation off the wall). On a chair nearby sat my one and only witness and enemy, the woman, looking very virtuous and prim. As I was led up to the table I gave a start of surprise and joy for there was sitting as revolutionary judge, examiner, commissar, or whatever his official capacity is called nowadays, Peter Gromov, one of my old patients, whom I had nursed through a bad case of peritonitis and who had told me over and over again that he'd do anything in the world for me

if ever he had the chance to. I wondered what he'd do now. Would he remember his promise or would he let his revolutionary ardour carry him away? I saw that he recognized me at once though he pretended beautifully not to, and bent low over some papers on his desk. I stood still, very quietly awaiting further developments. First of all, a dignified paper was read, describing the outrageous act I had committed, then the woman got up and told a long story about how she had caught me in the very act of tearing down the proclamation and of singing, "God save the Czar" as I did it. I nearly burst out laughing at this point, but Gromov knowing me pretty well, probably guessed my feelings for he gave me a swift glance of warning, that stopped me just in time. After the woman's story I was allowed to tell mine. While I was speaking, Gromov listened attentively though he never once looked at me. When I had finished he spoke in a low voice to the other men that were seated at his table and they seemed to agree with him. "We are going to see whether the prisoner's story is true or not," he said coldly, looking at me straight in the eyes for the first time. "I myself am going to stick one of today's proclamations on this wall — then a few minutes later you shall go through the same movements as those that you have just described to us and which, you say, brought the paper down unintentionally. If the paper comes right down as you touch it you are free, but if it does *not* — we shall believe that you purposely committed an unpardonable counter-revolutionary act for which you will be put in prison without any further conversation on the matter. Now let us proceed. A proclamation please."

A man handed him one, while from somewhere appeared a small jar of paste. Our revolutionary Solomon then arose and with the proclamation in one hand and the paste in the other walked over to a bare wall and proceeded in what seemed a very deliberate and thorough manner to paste the paper onto that wall. That done he stood by, watch in hand. "You said you touched that paper about five minutes after it had been put up?" he asked me. I bowed my head affirmatively. "Well, the five minutes are now up — come over here and jab it with your forefinger the way you did the first time." I came over, still not being able to understand whether the man was helping me out or not. As I stood next to him, however, with both our backs turned to the other people in the room, he suddenly smiled the kind old smile that I remembered so well when he was my patient, and then of course I knew that everything would be all right. So in great glee I poked my finger at the paper and down it came right over my head as it had done in the street. I strongly suspect my old friend of having played some tricks with that paste, thereby encouraging the proclamation to descend with the greatest rapidity possible. Anyway I was free, much to the disappointment and disgust of the comrade woman and my two capturers who looked daggers at me but didn't dare voice their disapproval. I could just picture how furious the woman was at having her "revolutionary reward" vanish into thin air! "You may go, citizeness," said my judge, giving me a permit to leave the place. "However," he added severely, "I advise you to be careful and not get mixed up in any other trouble again, you might not be

as lucky next time." I listened to his parting words with meekly bowed head and heart full of gratitude (I could have hugged the old dear) — then, clutching the paper of freedom, skipped out of the room as nimbly as my legs could carry me. In the doorway I bumped into Princess T. who was about to be brought in before the judges. Passing through the first room I caught a glimpse of my ex-neighbours: the woman was still puffing and the man still glaring at her muttering. Oh, it was good to be out of that place — back in the fresh air. What an experience! I don't think I shall tell it to the Parents as they would be too much upset.

Thursday, June 1
(June 14)

This morning we returned to Tzarskoe Selo and the Datcha Frederitze. Thank goodness, the horrid coachman was not at the station to cast on us another evil spell, and a pleasant young fellow drove us uneventfully straight to the villa. Everything seems all right though the servants are a bit nervous. So far no mysterious callers have disturbed our peace and we are busy unpacking for the second time.

Friday, June 2
(June 15)

No one bothered us last evening and we had a good night's rest. In the morning we walked through the Park and found it in pretty bad condition: soldiers all over the place, looking just as disreputable as ever — unkempt, dirty, slovenly, accompanied by filthy looking girls in tawdry finery, all shouting and singing songs at the top

of their voices, making violent love in public, and totally disregarding the most elementary rules of decency. The Park itself is in terrible shape — grass all trampled, benches overturned, statues broken. Sadly we wandered around, trying vainly to find some quiet spot, where we could sit down and read, but finally we had to give it up as hopeless and went home thoroughly disgusted and sick at heart. The B.'s dropped in after dinner and told us all the local news. It's hardly reassuring! — The All Russian Congress of Soviets has opened today in town and great things are expected of it, though what exactly no one seems to know.

Monday, June 5
(June 18)

The days are passing quietly enough though we live in constant apprehension of "what is going to happen next?" It feels strange to be in any other place than Troitskoe in summer, but we are fairly comfortable at the villa and have arranged our lives pleasantly enough, reading a great deal, walking and sometimes driving in a drosky that we hire by the hour. At last we've found a corner in the Park where no soldiers ever come and as I managed to drag over a bench there we spend the afternoons quietly with our books, completely isolated from the rest of the world. Muzzie is beginning to look better already, and I feel that after all we did the right thing in coming here. Yesterday we spent the day in the Park of Pavlovsk with our books and a little basket of provisions that the cook had packed for us. It was very quiet there, as evidently the soldiers prefer the Tzarskoe Park and we had a pleasant

afternoon. It's good to be alone with Muzzie again after all these months of hospital work and revolutionary excitement, and we are happy together.

Wednesday, June 7
(June 20)

The Dean of Saratoff University has answered my letter in regard to the Library, expressing boundless gratitude for Muzzie's offer and accepting it with evident delight. He thinks he can easily obtain a permit from Kerensky for the transportation of the Library from Troitskoe to Saratoff, but says that he would like, if possible, to see Muzzie first and talk it all over with her. Now we're trying to figure out how that can be arranged, as Muzzie can hardly be expected to go to Saratoff at a time like this. The mere thought has upset her!

The General came down to see us today and seemed in good spirits. However when we mentioned Saratoff to him he got perfectly furious and shouted that he'd never let us go there, never — Library or no Library! So there. What is to be done? Why can't that professor come here? I'll write him again this evening.

Thursday, June 8, on the train
(June 21)

Suddenly everything has arranged itself as nicely as possible and in the most unexpected way. Late last night Sister T. telephoned me, saying that as she was feeling very tired and in need of a vacation she had decided to take a trip down the Volga from Nijni-Novgorod to

Astrakhan and was leaving the very next day. Immediately the brilliant thought flashed through my mind — “Why here’s the solution of our Saratoff problem.” “I’m going with you,” I shouted into the phone excitedly. “Get me a ticket, don’t leave without me, wait for me! — I’ll be with you tomorrow morning.” “All right, come along,” she answered calmly, unperturbed as usual, no matter what happens. And here I am on the train with her bound for the Volga and Saratoff.

Saturday, June 10, on board the Steamer Citizen
(June 23)

The same Mother Volga — the same scenery — even the same magnificent boat I was on last year (only its name has been changed from an aristocratic to a democratic one!). Yes, outwardly all is exactly the same, but what a difference in the life on board! The revolution has penetrated here as everywhere else and brought with it those ugly, sordid touches that, like cankers, mar the beauty of everything. No longer do the sailors keep the ship trim and immaculate the way they used to! No longer does she shine from stem to stern! Everything is filthy, dingy and ill-kept. The decks are unwashed, the cabins dirty, food and service abominable — mirrors, silver, nickel and brass-ware unpolished, tablecloths soiled, furniture broken. Nothing seems to be done on time and apparently there is no schedule. We dock whenever we please, or rather whenever the crew pleases, and leave the same way. The ship’s officers have absolutely no authority over the sailors who run everything according to the de-

sires of their executive committee, with the most confusing results. Naturally they do their best to copy the revolutionary soldiers both in appearance and manners and succeed to perfection with their long hair, strange looking clothes and insolent ways. The passengers seem frightened and keep mostly to their cabins. Gone is the joyous spirit that used to reign on a pleasure boat like this, when everyone was carefree and happy from the first minute of the trip to the last. Fear, gloom, malevolence and danger stalk the ship now, making life hideous and spoiling even the beauty of the scenery — for who can enjoy it these days? It's like looking through smoked glasses at a picture rich in beautiful colours and then seeing those colours turn dull and grey. That's it, "dull and grey" — all the world seems dull and grey and my heart is heavy as lead.

Sunday, June 11

(June 24)

We dread every stop now, as all the piers are crowded with soldiers that come on board, making the boat filthier than ever. With steerage tickets, they come straight up to the first and second class cabin decks and settle themselves as comfortably as possible all over the place, the first comers occupying vacant cabins or deck chairs, while others, less fortunate, sleep in the drawing-rooms, dining-rooms, passages and bathrooms. The officers expostulate with them but in vain, as the crew, invariably, interferes and sides with the soldiers. Today the deck is strewn with shells of sunflower seeds, while picnic parties are being held in every available space to the accompaniment of

hoarse laughter, shouts, songs and harmonicas playing different tunes simultaneously in various corners of the deck. Pandemonium and nightmare — that's what it is!

Late that night

Impossible to sleep! A group of soldiers has settled under our window and every single man of that group is doing something objectionable. One is snoring, another hiccoughing, a third smoking that terrible "*mahorka*" they all love to smoke, a fourth is playing a harmonica and singing out of tune, while two others are quarrelling and swearing at each other at the top of their voices over an endless game of cards. The night is hot, the cabin stuffy and sleep out of the question! We cannot even open our door into the passage as several soldiers are sprawling there asleep. Bed bugs have appeared too, brought in, of course, by all those filthy people and our misery is complete. Thank heavens we'll be in Saratoff tomorrow morning. I've sent the professor a message asking him to come to the ship and talk matters over with me there. Then I think I'll go home by train as this is too awful!

Monday, June 12
(June 25)

I'm still alive, though it's miracle that I am — thanks to the Lord and a lot of unknown men. We arrived in Saratoff in the morning at ten o'clock and immediately, the minute we docked, hordes of soldiers came flocking up the gangway and on to the ship. Soon it became so crowded

there was hardly any room to move on deck, and one had to look carefully before putting a foot down, for fear of treading onto some sprawling soldier's face or body. The men were of the very worst type too, much worse than any we had seen before, and even the crew eyed them with visible alarm and disfavour. Some of the warriors were so exhausted they fell asleep right where they had thrown themselves down, while others unpacked their bundles and started to eat, covering the deck with the filthiest mess imaginable. That accomplished, they began exploring the ship and seemed very much pleased with the mirrors and silk upholsterings which they found in the drawing-rooms and dining-rooms. Pretty soon we heard strange noises and on investigation discovered a group of soldiers busily ripping the silk coverings off the seats and pulling mirrors out of their fixtures and frames. In vain the officers stormed and pleaded, in vain the members of the crew shouted their disapproval and exhorted their comrades "in the name of the revolution," to stop misbehaving — the brutes went on calmly with their work jeering at those who opposed them, amid the loud cheers of their supporters and admirers. Everything was in an uproar, no one seeming to know what to do next, when suddenly the Purser appeared and in a loud, imperious voice demanded to see those soldiers' tickets. Instantly they stopped their ripping and breaking, apparently frightened and abashed, and gazed at him in silent dismay. "Your tickets," roared the Purser again — while with hurried little gestures they searched their pockets for them. "Here's mine, your Honour," humbly murmured one, producing his ticket and

apparently quite forgetting all about the revolution with its abolition of titles and unconsciously reverting to the old way of addressing a superior. "And here's mine," said another, "and mine," added a third, as one after the other they shoved their tickets into the Purser's outstretched hand. "Hm, just as I thought, steerage tickets," he shouted when all were produced. "Well off to the steerage you go, where you belong, and don't you dare come back." To my amazement they obeyed, and silently, like whipped puppies, proceeded to slink out of the door. "For shame!" muttered a soldier standing next to me. He had been watching the scene with great interest though up to now he had not said a word. "It's shameful counter-revolution," he continued, "and that Purser should be hung! The idea of ordering those boys around the way he did." "And quite right too," I retorted, "what else could he do? Why those men were not fit to be here, breaking mirrors and ripping the stuff off the seats the way they did! Even steerage is too good for them, they should be in jail, that's where they should be." "What's that?" yelled the soldier. "What did you say? Hey, comrades, come and see what's to be done here! Listen to what she says — she says those soldiers are not fit to be on this ship and that jail is the only place for them! Something has to be done with her at once!" In a second I was surrounded with a mob of howling soldiers — "Shoot her, whip her, throw her overboard," they shouted, as they pressed closer in a frenzy of rage, their horrid breaths blowing right in my face. "Yes, let's throw her overboard, overboard in the river," they howled. Hot horny hands grabbed my

shoulders and elbows. The next instant I was lifted off my feet and swung into mid-air. Fingers like vices gripped my neck and ankles while little arrows of pain shot up and down my body. In those seconds of anguish it seemed to me that hell with all its devils and pitch-forks had been let loose to hurt me. "God, oh God," I heard myself moan. As they carried me on deck towards the railing I caught a glimpse of Sister T., her face frozen into a white mask of horror. She was sitting just where I had left her a few minutes ago with her knitting, and there she sat, still knitting furiously, evidently unable to stop in her agony of fear. "One, two, three," chanted the soldiers, swinging me backwards and forwards over the railing. The words of the childish rhyme, "One to be ready, two to be steady, three and away," and, "Oh if only I could make the sign of the cross," were the thoughts that flashed then through my mind. Suddenly I felt myself hurtling through the air. The next thing I knew I was lying on the deck in an agony of pain, then everything went dark and for the first time in my life I lost consciousness.

When I revived, feeling sick, giddy and aching all over, I found myself in our cabin, tucked up in my own berth with Sister T. and the ship's doctor by my side. They wanted me to be quiet and go to sleep, but I simply had to know right away what had happened and why I was still alive instead of being at the bottom of the Volga. So they gave in and told me the whole story. It appears that at the critical moment, just as I was about to go overboard, a group of men, consisting of the ship's officers, headed by our valiant Purser, and quite a large number of men pas-

sengers rushed to my rescue, caught me in the very act of going over and threw me in the opposite direction to that for which I was headed, and which happened to be the deck instead of the river, a painful way of having one's life saved, though evidently they had no choice in the matter. After that I was picked up and carried to my cabin while the fight went on between my rescuers and the soldiers. It seems to have been a grand *mêlée* which ended by the soldiers being defeated and fleeing ashore where the crowd of onlookers nearly tore them to pieces. Strangely enough the sympathy of the mob was entirely on my side and the soldiers were lucky to get away alive. But the funniest part is that while all this was going on the Professor arrived aboard and mildly asked for me. I can well picture his amazement and horror at finding me in such a predicament. Poor old gentleman, here he was all ready for a nice, quiet, dignified talk about books, only to find a terrific brawl going on instead, with the lady whom he was calling on, in the midst of it all. Oh dear, oh dear, why do such ridiculous things happen to me! Sister T. wouldn't let him see me that afternoon, but he came the same evening, just as we were moving to another ship and helped us carry our bags. We've decided to go back the same way, as everyone says that the trains are even worse than the boats. After all our wild experiences, Sister T. doesn't want to go on to Astrakhan and we're leaving for Nijni-Novgorod tomorrow morning on the "Borodino." The Professor is an old dear and I'm so glad the Library will be in his care. He thinks he can get it over in a week or two, as soon as he receives permission

from Kerensky. We talked late into the night, and I gave him the catalogue which I had brought along with me, the very same catalogue I had compiled with Mlle. Jacobi (my governess) when I was sixteen and that, luckily, I had sent for last winter in order to have an extra copy made. I cried when it was time to say good-bye to the Professor, for I knew that I was parting from our Library forever and the thought, coming on top of everything I had been through that day, unnerved me completely. "Don't be afraid, I'll take good care of the Library," murmured the dear old gentleman, kissing my hand in courtly fashion, while two big tears trickled down his cheeks into his beard, "Really, it'll be quite safe in our hands, whereas in the country the peasants would probably destroy it. Then some day, when all is normal again, if you wish, you can take it back." Oh he was so kind, so understanding, so good! Sister T. was weeping in a corner too, and that is the way that interview ended, the interview I had come for all the way down from Petrograd to Saratoff! I cannot sleep after all the excitement of this day and though Sister T. protests vehemently, am sitting up in my berth writing my diary.

Tuesday, June 13

(June 26)

This boat is a haven of rest compared to the one we just left and we simply cannot believe that such a lovely place exists after the hell we've been through. It's all too good to be true. Everything is clean as can be and kept in perfect order. the food excellent, the crew polite and ever

so proud of the condition of the ship. Why we even run on schedule! It's really amazing! There is an executive committee as everywhere else, of course, but instead of bringing confusion and destruction it maintains discipline and helps run the ship as smoothly as in pre-revolutionary days. The president of the executive committee is a very intelligent looking, serious and dignified sailor, whom the Captain constantly consults and the crew obeys implicitly.

Somehow he even manages to keep the soldiers in their proper places and they remain quietly in the steerage without ever trying to come up to the first and second class cabin decks. All this just proves what a strong character that sailor must be, for it is perfectly clear that he alone controls the whole situation.

I am feeling much better now though my nerves are still jumpy and my bruises pretty painful. The weather being perfect, Sister T. and I sit on deck from early morning until late at night with books we hardly ever open, and sewing untouched, drowsily watching the river and the ever changing panorama of the distant landscape as our ship glides smoothly on. It is wonderful to be able to sit and not do anything but relax and dream and rest. After the turmoil of the past months it is the most perfect rest cure one could desire and I am enjoying every blessed minute of it. How I wish we could stay on this ship and from Nijni go down to Astrakhan and then back to Nijni again! But I cannot leave Muzzie alone for so long, as I know she needs me even though the General is with her now.

Wednesday, June 14
(June 27)

There are two girls on board that belong to the "Women's Battalion of Death" and are on their way to the Front. Dressed as men soldiers, every detail of their attire perfect, they hold themselves with great dignity and a certain aloofness that is most becoming. They are both young, tall, well built, quite pretty and very intelligent looking. Clean, tidy and smart, they present such a contrast to the soldiers of today! I spoke to them last evening and they were most interesting. They told me all about the Battalion of Death, its rules and regulations, the reason why they joined it and their various experiences. Their greatest difficulty, they said, was to cope with the insolence of the soldiers who either try to make love to them or else ridicule and insult them. The older girl Sonia Vassilieva (she is 24) has a peculiarly charming voice and a very interesting way of describing her experiences, while Tania Somova the younger one (21) is extremely witty and sees mostly the funny side of things. Both girls come from the same village near Samara, went to the same school and have known each other all their lives. They speak of the Front, with its mutilations and death, quite calmly, as a matter of course — are intensely patriotic and ardently desire, above all, to give their lives for their country. They have promised to write me from the Front or else have someone notify me in case they are both wounded or killed. My heart ached as I listened to their enthusiastic talk. It's bad enough to see the soldiers leave for the Front of horrors, which I know so well, without having girls go too.

Saturday, June 17
(June 30)

Back in Tzarskoe after an uneventful train ride home, I parted with Sister T. in Moscow, where she has some friends with whom she is going to stay for the remainder of her vacation. Poor thing, — she is still quite shaky after all our harrowing experiences on the Volga (especially the one in Saratoff) and has asked for two extra weeks rest. The General and Muzzie were so glad to see me that it was well worth hurrying home. Of course I did not tell them about my close call in Saratoff as it would only have frightened them horribly and made them ill. They've had a quiet time together in Tzarskoe and look like two dear old love-birds, fluffy and content.

Later

At the "All Russian Congress of Workmen's Delegates" Lenin has been making violent speeches directed against the Allies, while Kerensky is trying to prove that those speeches have been dictated by Germany and that Lenin is in Germany's pay. Kerensky's own speeches addressed to "all, all, all!" are as usual, magnificent and tremendously inspiring. If only he could act as strongly as he can speak, he'd be a powerful dictator by now, with Russia on her way to political reorganization and order. He really should do something about Lenin, his friends Kameneff Zinovieff, Trotsky and all Bolsheviks in general, instead of allowing them to paralyze his actions and undermine his authority! If he does not wish to exile them, Russia being a free country now, he should at least

find a way of suppressing their demoralizing and anti-patriotic activities which seem to prove that he justly accuses them of being in Germany's pay. For the sake of the Revolution and its ideals, which he mentions adoringly in every one of his speeches, he should show his enemies that he is master of the situation not only in splendid words, but in strong deeds as well. He would have so many followers then, for after all the world does love a strong man, and a great leader always fascinates and attracts the multitudes.

Sunday, June 18
(July 1)

There were demonstrations today on the Field of Mars at the graves of the victims of the Revolution, but nothing really exciting happened. A few speeches, a few fights, some singing and parading and that was all. Sister Natalia went there, saw the little there was to see and telephoned me all about it.

Monday, June 19
(July 2)

Kerensky is at the front, urging the troops to start an offensive and apparently his speeches are having the desired effect, as he telegraphs that a great offensive has really begun. It seems too good to be true and we hardly dare believe it. If only our troops are victorious it will mean the end of this confusing period and the beginning of a glorious new era.

Wednesday, June 21
(July 4)

Great excitement about the Offensive. It's so long since something really good has happened to Russia that every-

one is perfectly hysterical with joy. Patriotic demonstrations are parading the streets and there's an air of happy festivity that is a welcome change after the gloom and ugly feelings of the past few months. The General spends most of his time in church praying to the miraculous Icon of Our Lady, and bowing down to the ground with such fervour that he comes home with patches of dust on his forehead and knees. It's wonderful how his faith carries him through all phases of life and makes him cheerful and happy despite his infirmity and many sorrows. He still continues to express his opinions to the top of his voice, much to our dismay, keeping us in a state of perpetual terror concerning his safety. So far he has gone untouched, but who knows what may happen to him any minute in these times of unrest, where one thoughtless word or action can unleash again the ever watchful fiends of hatred and bloodshed.

Wednesday, June 28
(July 11)

The army of General Korniloff has broken through the Austrian front and captured the town of Galitch yesterday. Delirious joy everywhere!

Friday, June 30
(July 13)

The Bolsheviks are doing their best to stop the Offensive and their hateful propaganda is getting stronger every day. They send agitators to the Front now to persuade the soldiers to stop fighting, and in several places have succeeded. Why, oh why, doesn't Kerensky do something to prevent that poisonous propaganda? Gradually the enthu-

siasm is dying out and the old gloomy pall settling over everything again. That brief respite was too good to be true.

Monday, July 3

(July 16)

Kerensky returned to Petrograd from the Front yesterday, only to hurry back today, as there is bad news from Korniloff. He has evacuated Kalush and instead of the glorious Offensive, it looks like a shameful retreat again. Besides that there is a great deal of unrest in town. The Bolsheviks are openly attacking the Provisional Government and their new slogan is "All Power to the Soviets." Armed motor lorries, as in the first days of the Revolution, are again rushing madly up and down the streets, urging the soldiers to join the uprising. Several regiments have revolted, while others are still faithful to the Government. As a result there have been several collisions between the two sides with some killed and many wounded. Kerensky, they say, is returning to Petrograd with the intention of arresting the Bolshevik leaders.

Wednesday, July 5

(July 18)

The newspapers are full of the story of Lenin's treason and that of his accomplices. That he is positively an agent for Germany, working for Russia's destruction, is a fact that will be proved by documents, shortly to be published. This latest news, apparently, has paralysed the revolutionary ardour of yesterday's mutineers and the uprising

has stopped. Those who had joined it seem pretty much ashamed of themselves today. "What? Did we side with a traitor and were we going to help Germany destroy Russia?" they seem to say, as they slink along the streets with heads bowed down in shame. The General is again expressing his opinion of them in a thunderous and militant voice and we quake in our shoes every time he goes out.

Thursday, July 6
(July 19)

We've heard that Lenin and Zinovieff have escaped to Finland. It's always that way: the leaders disappear in time to save their skins, leaving the little men of no importance to pay!

Friday, July 7
(July 20)

Kerensky returned last evening and was received by cheering crowds. They say the Soviets are furious about the publication of Lenin's treason and are going to prove that it is nothing but slander. Meanwhile the Provisional Government seems to be very popular once again, while the Bolsheviks are hiding in disgrace. Military cadets have formed bands that are hunting for them all over town, and many have been caught and arrested.

Sunday, July 9
(July 22)

The uprising in Petrograd has naturally affected the morale of the troops at the Front and there is no more

question of any Offensive. On the contrary the Germans have broken through our lines in Tarnopol and several other places and things look blacker than ever. Prince Lvov has resigned and Kerensky is now Premier, besides being Minister of War. He is desperately trying to enforce discipline. Yesterday an order was issued restoring capital punishment, and military censorship, also the suppression of several newspapers, much to the disgust of the radical elements and the joy of the conservatives, our General included.

Monday, July 10
(July 23)

A new manifesto of the Soviets declares the Provisional Government to be the "one and only government" that can save the country. So far good! Also the garrison of Petrograd has announced its decision to trust and support the government to the very end. All that is excellent — only somehow I don't seem to believe in it. Things have a way of twisting around in the most disconcerting manner these days and opinions are as changeable as weather-cocks.

Saturday, July 15
(July 28)

The General nearly got himself into trouble today and I am still sick with fright whenever I think of it. It was this way: early this morning I had to go to town, on Hospital business, and was just settling down comfortably with my newspaper in a corner of the day coach, when all of a sudden, to my surprise, I heard the familiar paternal voice, followed by the appearance of the General himself

in his most belligerent mood. Having left him peacefully at the breakfast table, without the slightest intention of going to town, I naturally was amazed to see him get on the train. He had evidently just been having a heated argument with someone outside whom I could not see, and was still in a very wrathful frame of mind as he sat down in a seat next to the door. My first impulse was to go and sit next to him, but on second thought I decided that it was safer not to, as he would immediately start commenting on current events and as usual get himself into trouble. So I sat very quietly and began to read the newspaper, hoping devoutly that he'd do the same. However he was in no mood to be quiet and as I cautiously peeped around the sheet of my paper, I saw him gazing severely over his spectacles at a man who had just come in and forgotten to close the door behind him. "Close that door," commanded the General sternly, while the man, a meek looking little fellow, obediently ran back and closed it. Presently two other men came in and also left the door open. "The door, the door, close that door!" started the General again in a tone of voice that was beginning to get irritated. "Close it yourself, old man," answered one of the men, good-humouredly, sitting down next to his companion and continuing an earnest conversation. "I said close that door!" repeated the General loudly, now thoroughly angry and raising his voice as he glowered at both men. But they paid no attention to him and went on talking, so after a minute of fierce glaring he got up and slammed the offending door himself, murmuring angry little things under his breath. The next minute, however,

that unfortunate door was opened again — this time to admit quite a large group of soldiers. "The door, the door, shut that door!" shouted the General as the last soldier passed, leaving it wide open. Something familiar in his tone of voice made them all stop and stare at him. For a second they were just soldiers ready to obey a superior's command, then they burst out laughing. "How dare you laugh?" cried the General, standing up and looking, oh, so imposing — his grey whiskers bristling with fury. "Stand to attention when a General is speaking to you," he continued sternly. I jumped up in horror, fully expecting the soldiers to assault him, but one of them, a decent looking fellow, motioned the others to be quiet and advanced towards the General alone. "What do you mean by talking to us this way?" he asked coldly, but politely. "Don't you know that times have changed and you cannot order us about any longer — your Excellency," he added with evident sarcasm. "Stand at attention and shut that door!" commanded the General undaunted, looking positively magnificent as he stood there all alone facing those men. I couldn't stand it a minute longer. Choking with tears (I never felt more sorry for him in all my life), I rushed up to his side, put my arm through his and gave him a little pull, forming with my lips the words: "Be quiet," in the language for the deaf that we all use when speaking to him. "Be quiet yourself," he retorted, turning around and looking at me angrily, "and don't mix up in things that do not concern you. This is military business." Desperately I turned to the soldier spokesman: "Please, please," I gasped, "Leave him alone, he is very old and deaf and doesn't

hear a word you say. It's like talking to a child." To my disgust the tears were just streaming down my face as I hung on to the General's arm. For a second the man hesitated, glared at us again — we must have been a strange looking pair — then suddenly his eyes softened and he smiled. "It's all right, little Sister," he said. (Thank God, I was wearing my Red Cross uniform!) "We won't hurt your old man, but tell him to keep quiet and not talk so much. Come on, boys — let's get going." And as he turned to go he actually closed that miserable door! A good fellow that man, oh, how good! "There you see?" said the General triumphantly as we sat down side by side. "He finally did shut that door! You know one has to maintain discipline, especially at a time like this. As for you, young lady," he added, looking at me severely, "don't you dare interfere again in matters that don't concern you, leave me to handle such situations." All I could do was nod in silence and swallow those stupid tears. Luckily no one came through that door any more and we read the newspapers (at least I pretended to) until we arrived at Petrograd Station. From there I telephoned the Matron, cancelling my business appointment at the Hospital, and followed the General around all day until it was time for us both to return to Tzarskoe.

Wednesday, July 19
(August 1)

I am spending a week at the Hospital relieving one of the girls in the operating room. It's terribly hot in town and in the evenings I run down to Tzarskoe to see the Parents and breathe some fresh air, which isn't so fresh

after all, as a tremendous area of peat is burning for miles and miles around Petrograd and Tzarskoe, creating a dense, fog-like haze that hangs low over the smouldering ground and makes the air hotter than ever. At sunset that haze often takes on a dull red hue that transforms the open spaces into swirling, steaming fields of Hades, lurid and sinister. There are forest fires too, and to add to all our plagues cholera is slowly but surely creeping up towards us from the south.

Friday, July 21

(August 3)

I was suddenly taken ill with a mild form of influenza, of which there is quite an epidemic in town and kept in bed for two days. Tomorrow morning am returning to Tzarskoe where Muzzie is laid up since yesterday with an infected toe. Thank goodness the General is all right.

Saturday, July 22

(August 4)

All the Ministers having resigned several days ago, Kerensky has been busy forming a new government, but on account of the various political parties at war with each other, he seems to be having a hard time. We've heard that he was secretly in Tzarskoe last night, having given up his Premiership and other positions while there was a decisive meeting of all parties in the Winter Palace, the question of his resignation being debated. Finally they decided that he, after all, was the only man capable of forming a new Ministry and adopted a resolution of confidence towards him, asking him to return to his post.

Monday, July 24
(*August 6*)

Kerensky is Premier again, having formed a new Ministry, and the political crisis is over, for how long, of course, remains to be seen. He has made General Korniloff commander-in-chief and Savenkoff (who was connected with the murder of the Grand Duke Serge), Vice-Premier. As for the others — it's no use bothering to write their names down, as they'll probably be changed very soon and I am getting sick and tired of trying to keep up with this absurd Ministerial "leap-frog."

There have been rumours circulating for some time about various conspiracies to abduct the Emperor and his family, but whether there is any truth in those tales it is hard to know. The government's inquiry concerning the so-called "treason" of both Emperor and Empress, ended in their complete vindication and there seems to be no reason why they should not be allowed to leave the country openly and go wherever they'd want to, without being abducted. Several times I have tried to get in touch with my friend Nastinka, who is with the Empress, but always unsuccessfully. I also sent her a letter, some dresses, pretty underwear, and a few books, but have not been able to find out whether that parcel ever reached her.

Saturday, July 29
(*August 11*)

Everybody seems terrified again, as though expecting some dreadful thing to happen, though no one seems to be able to define the reason of that terror. It's an uncanny

feeling to be afraid of something without knowing what it is, just like waiting for a "thing of horror" to spring on one in the dark and not being able to foresee from which side the attack will come. Everyone is suffering from the same symptoms, every sound makes one jump, every sign seems portentous and fraught with evil meaning. The soldiers in the park gather in groups and with an air of mystery, in low tones, discuss some topic of great interest, so absorbing that they even neglect their girls. An automobile tire, exploding with the noise of a gun shot, caused a veritable panic near the station yesterday, all passers-by in the vicinity rushing wildly for shelter in a mad scramble of terror. The sight of a huge truck, slowly driving down the street, loaded with cheap looking, empty coffins, made of yellow planks loosely joined together, also created a panic, and immediately the rumour spread that quite a number of people were to be arrested, shot and put into those hideous coffins that very night. The servants have heard that some prince (?) was buried alive the other day after horrible tortures, and Sister Natalia, who came down to spend the day with me, said that the soldiers in the Hospital had warned her that soon something would happen so terrible that all previous horrors were as nothing in comparison. In Church a woman suddenly fell down in a fit, foaming at the mouth and screaming that she saw the Devil himself standing on the threshold, not daring to enter the sanctuary, but awaiting, pitch-fork in hand for his victims to come out. . . . Some say there was a flaming cross above the sun two days ago, while others whisper about a mysterious great black horse that

passes riderless, through the park at night without leaving any hoof prints or making the slightest sound; Peter the Great's equestrian bronze statue in Petrograd was seen to leave its granite pedestal and gallop past the Winter Palace encircling it three times; a cockerel was hatched with three heads; a baby born half monster, half man. Strange tales are being told on all sides and all, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, young and old, all are frightened to death! Muzzie and I sleep in the same room these nights and the General leaves wide open the door that leads into our room. All the women servants have moved into one big room, and Peter has sent for his wife to keep him company. There is a persistent rumour that we shall all be killed one night and some have even found little chalk made crosses on the front doors of their houses indicating assuredly that those houses are doomed!

Sunday, July 30
(August 12)

Last night a little white cross was made on our front door. Peter showed it to me this morning, his face white as a sheet, his jaw trembling. He has wiped it off as best he could, but if one looks intently at the spot, it can still be seen, though ever so faintly. We have decided not to tell the Parents, who, not having very good eyesight, will never notice it.

Monday, July 31
(August 13)

An anonymous letter arrived today, bearing the Tzar-skoe post-mark. "Be careful, very, very careful" was all

it said, nothing else. It was written on good paper, in red ink, the letters printed. We showed it to the General, hoping it would really make him more "careful," but he merely shrugged his shoulders and threw the letter into the fire. "Might have germs, safer to burn it," was his only comment, though we notice that he has been quite subdued all day. Tomorrow he is going back to town for a few days despite our protests and entreaties.

Tuesday, August 1
(August 14)

It's way past midnight, but something so strange has happened — I must write it down at once. We had gone to bed about an hour ago and I was floating blissfully in that lovely state of semi-consciousness that precedes real sleep, when all of a sudden something jerked me back to life, making me sit up in bed wide awake and alert, every nerve tingling. The next instant my strained ears caught the sound of stealthy footsteps outside, followed by a little scraping noise like that of a dog scratching on the door. Jumping up and rushing to the open window I leaned out and saw distinctly a human figure bending low over the doorstep. Whether it was a man or a woman I couldn't make out, as it seemed to be swathed in the folds of a long voluminous cloak, of the kind that old women of the people usually wear to church. Before I could utter a sound or move again, the figure had quickly straightened itself up and, running swiftly towards the street in a way no old woman could run, disappeared from sight. I stood by the window wondering what it was all about and think-

ing that perhaps another little white cross had just been painted on the door, when I happened to look down and dimly saw something small and white lying on the doorstep. Out of the room and down the stairs I flew, unlocking the front door with shaking hands in a fever of excitement, as I bent down to see what was lying there. It was an envelope, a tiny little thing, gleaming ever so white in the dark. Quick as lightning I picked it up and carrying it into the drawing-room, turned on the light. It was addressed to "Irotchka" (the nickname my intimate friends call me) and that was all! No other name, no address. With trembling fingers I opened it and found a wee note written in a very familiar handwriting. "May God protect you dearest," it said. "Pray for me!" No signature, but undoubtedly Nastinka's writing. Yes, it was clearly written in her hand. What does it mean? Has she written that cryptic note because she has no other way of letting me know that she is alive and well? Has some kindly circumstance, in the shape of that swathed figure, made it possible for her to send me a word, to be followed by others soon, or are those rumours true that the Imperial family is to be moved one of these days to an unknown destination and, that being the case, was Nastinka's little note a farewell? I am so anxious, so anxious.

Wednesday, August 2
(August 15)

Now something really has happened! The Emperor has been sent by the government to Tobolsk with the Empress, the girls, Alexei and a small retinue — doubtless

all those that had been with them in Tzarskoe, all except Mme. Narischkine and the Benckendorffs, who evidently are too old to follow. It's absolutely Kerensky's doing they say, he decided that they should be moved, he came to fetch them, he saw them off at dawn! But why, why Tobolsk of all places, unless they'll be allowed to leave the country from there? Maybe that's the reason! Of course it would be far easier to rescue them in Tobolsk than in Tzarskoe, with its dangerously minded garrison and Petrograd, the very heart of the Revolution, so close at hand. Oh I hope and pray that is the reason.

We have heard that after being ordered at eleven o'clock of the evening to get ready to leave at once, they were kept waiting for hours and hours, till early morning in fact, sitting on uncomfortable chairs in the hall by their luggage, dressed in travelling clothes with hats on until finally, as the sun came up, they were taken to the train. We went to Church to pray for them and found many people there, nearly all crying bitterly. Though their departure was veiled in a great deal of mystery the public somehow found out what was going to happen and quite a crowd gathered near the Palace railing. Tatiana went there, in the hopes of catching a glimpse of Nastinka, whose maid she had once been, but grew tired of waiting and went home long before they left. I am furious with her for not telling me, as I would have gone too and stayed until the very end. She says she was afraid that I might get into trouble there and that's why she did not tell me. Now I understand that Nastinka's note meant good-bye. I don't know why I'm crying so hard, I can

hardly see what I'm writing. After all it is probably for the best that they have been taken away from Tzarskoe and soon, God give, we'll hear that they are safely in England.

Saturday, August 5
(*August 18*)

There is going to be a great Conference in Moscow soon and all parties are to be represented, Monarchists and Bolsheviks included. Goodness only knows what this new Conference is supposed to accomplish, besides a prodigious amount of talking, of course, that so far, has not led us anywhere except down endless mazes of muddle, through which we are still hopelessly wandering. We certainly are a great race of talkers, only the Bolsheviks seem to do some energetic acting as well. In order to forget our troubles and fears Muzzie and I read aloud to each other a great deal, choosing preferably amusing books and studiously avoiding any that are sad or depressing. Just now we have nearly finished a novel called *The Little Lady of the Big House* all through which, like a theme, runs Kipling's Romany song: "The Gypsy Trail."

It's tune positively haunts me and, I know, will always remind me of these days in Tzarskoe, provided we get through them alive. It has always been so strange to me that all through my life certain tunes have suddenly become closely associated with certain periods and episodes, though mostly without any apparent reason. Why should this tune haunt me, instead of the various revolutionary songs that one hears everywhere nowadays, and which

would be so much more appropriate? Inexplicable. Muz-zie often says now, "Play me your life, Cherry Tree," and I go to the piano and play in succession all the tunes of importance to me, beginning with "The Blue Bells of Scotland," that bring back so vividly the misery of my early childhood, when Nana used to go to England for her summer vacation and I, a tot of three or four, would cry myself sick as she packed her trunks! But she never sang "The Blue Bells of Scotland," in fact she never sang at all, except nursery jingles, and I shall never know why that particular song became part of my first great sorrow. Even now it gives me a choking feeling when I hear it and makes me actually relive that childish agony of parting as poignantly as it did years and years ago. The song associated with my first love, when I was barely sixteen also hurts and "Sing a Song of Sixpence" is sheer anguish. That, of course, is comprehensible, as I sang it to my dying baby over and over again, as he pleaded in his poor little hoarse voice, "sing about the sixpence song, sing" . . . and I sang it an endless number of times, rocking him backwards and forwards to the measure of the tune until the very end. Oh, well, what's the use of writing about all these things! It's as bad as playing the tunes on the piano. If sorrow does not kill one at the time it strikes, the only thing to do is carry on. Not forget, because one never can forget.

Muzzie and I were talking about those days yesterday. She showed me the diaries I used to write and which she has kept, yes, every one of them; copy books that I had

filled with tales of astronomy and poems dedicated to the moon and stars. Oh, those diaries! How well I remember the day I started the first one. It was on my seventh birthday, and Muzzie had given me a gilt-edged, blue morocco book, with "Diary" stamped on it in impressive letters of gold and a lock and key to assure its privacy. Alas for that privacy! Soon, very soon, the lock was picked and Olga would read my "Diary" out loud to Miki and others, amid roars of laughter. I always knew, when I heard those roars, that my precious Diary had been stolen again and was being made fun of, and I'd rush downstairs to the room where my tormentors were gathered, and fighting like a wild-cat (much to their delight) I would snatch the book away from them, tearing back with it upstairs to my own room, weeping bitterly at the outrage. Every day I'd put it in some new place and every day they'd manage to find it. Muzzie still has that famous blue book, the first of a long line of diaries, succeeded by pink books, red books, green and yellow books. Then, as I grew older they were followed by ordinary copy books for I wrote enormously those days and had no time to wait for the Christmas and birthday arrivals of regular diaries, expensively bound, with gilt edges and fancy paper.

Monday, August 7

(August 20)

Everybody seems to distrust the new currency, and prices are going up all the time. Good old Romanoff money is in great demand, while "Kerenki" are being

used with suspicion and disgust, some even refusing to accept them. Despite our nameless forebodings and fears, nothing unusually horrible has occurred so far and life seems pretty quiet once again. We have resumed our walks and also the little excursions to Pavlovsk where we like to spend the day with our wee picnic basket and books. The General is back in town and we are again together — just Muzzie and I.

Wednesday, August 9
(August 22)

People are now saying that Kerensky will soon be crowned Emperor and that in the Winter Palace, where he occupies the apartments of the Emperor Alexander III, he already strikes Imperial attitudes, getting ready for the role, though a little prematurely, I should say. There is a great deal of talk about his liaison with the fascinating dramatic actress, T., who according to rumour is a very ambitious person and ardently desires to play an important part in the great man's political life as well as in his private one. Who knows? Being lovely, clever, talented she may have a good influence on him and help Russia in many ways. On the other hand all these tales are probably nothing but a pack of lies, and as usual one has to be very careful about believing all one hears.

Friday, August 11
(August 24)

I am lazy these days and do nothing but read, walk and listen to Muzzie telling long stories about old times. Makes me feel like a little girl again.

Monday, August 14
(August 27)

The famous Conference has opened in Moscow at the Big Theatre. How I'd like to be there!

Wednesday, August 16
(August 29)

The representative of the Left wing and the representative of the Right wing of the Conference publicly shook hands on the platform yesterday, showing the whole world that they bear each other no malice and are ready to work together. That really is splendid and something far more important than the most eloquent speeches that do not seem to accomplish anything. But then again we've been disappointed so often that we hardly dare believe that that act means anything besides being a graceful gesture. If only the Left and the Right would tolerate each other and cooperate a little until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, instead of fighting all the time, how much better it would be! At the present time our one and great hope *is* the Constituent Assembly, but oh how far off it seems.

General Korniloff apparently was quite lionized in Moscow, having created a great impression by going to the Iverskaia Shrine and praying in front of the Miraculous Icon of our Lady, just as the Emperor used to do. Crowds of people went wild with enthusiasm, kneeling down as he passed, throwing flowers at him, calling him hero and saviour. How Kerensky must have hated all that, though of course the Left was entirely on his side and only those

of the Right acclaimed Korniloff. Our General is delighted and only regrets that he was not there to do a little hero worshipping himself.

Thursday, August 17
(*August 30*)

The Conference is over and again it seems as though "a mountain gave birth to a mouse," to use an old saying. Except the handshaking of the two political leaders and the enthusiasm over Korniloff, there does not seem to be much to brag about. Of course Tseretelli did say that the war must go on and that Russia would never sign a separate peace, but can one believe him, and even if he is sincere, will he be strong enough to carry out that promise?

Sunday, August 20
(*September 2*)

Bad news! The Germans are attacking us near Riga and the question is will our troops be able to resist them?

Tuesday, August 22
(*September 4*)

Alas, it is quite true that the Germans have broken through our lines and that Petrograd is in danger. The latest news is that the government is going to move to Moscow, as they say Kerensky fears a counter-revolution, as well as a German invasion, and thinks that the old Capital is a safer place than Petrograd. There have been several conspiracies against his life, so says rumour again, but nothing definite is known. It wouldn't surprise me if he were killed. What dreadful consequences would fol-

low an act like that! Why, we'd have the Revolution all over again, terror and all!

Wednesday, August 23
(September 5)

Yesterday we dined at the B.'s and I sat next to X. He told us that he sincerely hoped the Germans would come to Petrograd, overthrow the present government, hang all the socialists, Bolsheviki and anarchists and reinstate the Emperor on the throne. Several others agreed with him and didn't in the least approve my point of view when I said that Russia's internal politics should be settled by Russians only, not by intruders and most certainly not by our enemies. We had quite a heated argument and in the end several people made angry "double chins" at me to show their disapproval of my opinions. The Emperor would be the first to refuse the throne if he had to pay the price of dishonour for it. Can't they understand that he is too much of an idealist to consent to an abominable thing like that? I think X. is detestable and I thoroughly despise him.

Thursday, August 24
(September 6)

There are persistent rumours again about a powerful new conspiracy, aimed against the government. As usual, of course, the rumours are very confusing, every one of them being different and flatly contradicting the other.

Saturday, August 26
(September 8)

That Petrograd is in real danger can be seen from the fact that, at Kerensky's request, General Korniloff is send-

ing us some troops from the front, evidently to reinforce the none too reliable local garrison. The State Archives and valuables are being packed off, post haste, to Moscow, while many people, having become panicky are leaving town as fast as they can. Some of the wealthy churches have started to pack their treasures of gold and precious stones, even taking apart their great silver and bronze candelabras and chandeliers so as to get them ready to be shipped to Moscow as quickly as possible.

Sunday, August 27
(September 9)

The troops from the front under the command of General Krimoff are expected any time now, being some where near Louga. It is the Savage Division that is arriving, much to everyone's surprise, as it had taken an active part in the last uprising and was in disgrace afterwards.

The town is in a fever of excitement and simply overflowing with contradictory rumours too bewildering, too numerous to write about at a time like this, when every minute is of interest and full of unexpected twists and turns. What to believe no one knows. It's just like a topsyturvy cinema reel again, as in the first days of the revolution.

Monday, August 28
(September 10)

Amazing news! General Korniloff is in open revolt against Kerensky and has declared himself dictator, a pretty serious decision, considering that he is the Commander-in-chief of all the armies!

Tuesday, August 29

(September 11)

Confusion of confusions! By order of the Provisional government General Krimoff has been arrested. He had not reached Petrograd yet, was cut off from Korniloff's army and deserted by the Savage Division, his men accusing him of having brought them under false pretences, telling them that there was a Bolshevik uprising in Petrograd and that they were to protect the Provisional government when really nothing of the kind had occurred. Krimoff has been brought to Petrograd, under arrest. No one seems to understand what has happened so suddenly and why Kerensky had him arrested when, after all, he really was on his way to protect the Government and consequently the Premier himself, at the latter's special request. It's really unbelievably confusing!

Wednesday, August 30

(September 12)

General Krimoff is dead, having shot himself after an interview with Kerensky! Korniloff has resigned. That apparently is the end of an amazing tragedy — or is it only the beginning?

Thursday, August 31

(September 13)

Kerensky is being terribly criticized and accused of being a provocator. First he demanded that troops be sent to Petrograd, then he arrested their leader! It's hard to make

head or tail of it. He, Kerensky, is going to be Commander-in-chief instead of Korniloff, and Verhovsky Minister of War.

Friday, September 1
(September 14)

Now things are clearing up. It appears that Kerensky, when asking General Korniloff to send some troops to Petrograd, made a special point of explaining that he did not want the Savage Division, as it had been mixed up in the last uprising. Whereupon Korniloff deliberately sent the one and only division that Kerensky had asked him not to send, shortly afterwards proclaiming himself dictator, with the intention of using General Krimoff's Savage Division to overthrow the Provisional government. Kerensky was warned of the danger and arrested General Krimoff just in time to prevent civil war and another revolution. It seems that Vladimir Lvov, former procurator of the Holy Synod played a very strange role in all this, apparently making inaccurate statements to Kerensky about Korniloff and *vice versa*. . . . Whether he meant it or not he certainly was the one that started the whole trouble.

Kerensky has lost much of his prestige through all this Korniloff-Krimoff tragedy. The Press continues to accuse him of having played the part of provocator and the entire body of the Provisional government is being much blamed, all its enemies both of the extreme Right and the extreme Left, using this incident to discredit it as much as possible. That seems such a pity, for after all, weak as it

is, the present government is better than anarchy, and that's probably what we'll have, if Kerensky's Ministry is overthrown.

Saturday, September 2
(September 15)

Now we are being ruled by a Council of Five presided over by Kerensky, the Soviet positively refusing to have anything more to do with the Coalition government, that, of course, being the result of the Korniloff incident. Alas, there is to be another conference soon, that will have to face the problem of forming a new government again, this time more pleasing to the socialists. In order to pacify them Kerensky has officially proclaimed the country a Republic today, and that is what Russia is from now on: a Republic. I've seen an Imperial Monarchy, I've seen a Revolution, I've seen the rise and fall of quite a few temporary and most ephemeral governments, now today I have seen the birth of a Republic! It's certainly quite a record considering that I am still in my twenties!

Tuesday, September 5
(September 18)

Today I am in town again doing some work at the Hospital. My old patients of the Chronic Surgical ward gave me a wonderful welcome and presented me with a little white woollen jacket that Sidor had knitted himself. It touched me and made me very happy! Really they are all splendid fellows and it's such a pity when they suddenly decide that they are revolutionists and start acting like

stupid, ill-mannered, mischievous boys! I'll always keep that little jacket. It took Sidor six weeks to knit it and all the boys chipped in and bought the wool and ribbons with their very own poor little pennies. In return I am arranging a little feast in the ward, with surprise packages to make it complete. Afterward we'll have some music and a cinema show.

Wednesday, September 6
(September 19)

The Bolsheviks are masters of the Soviet now, thus acquiring a strong foothold in the government. Trotsky seems to be a man of great energy!

Thursday, September 7
(September 20)

My party was a great success and everybody had a good time. The Revolution was forgotten, the boys ate, sang, played games, told stories, appreciated the gifts and were as happy and kindly as in the good old days. Once only, when Bogdanoff started to sing a Revolutionary song, did they suddenly become silent and serious, but not for long, the singer being rather rudely interrupted and told to "shut up," while Vania broke into one of the jolly old marching songs that requires a chorus with plenty of shouting and whistling and clapping of hands! Bogdanoff seemed rather abashed (though I'm sure he had not meant, deliberately, to spoil the fun), and the one and only little cloud quickly blew away. I enjoyed it all as much as they did and am so glad I did not listen to the people who had advised me not to give the party.

Saturday, September 9
(September 22)

General Korniloff is under arrest and will soon be tried for high treason. With the Coalition government so unfortunately compromised, the Bolsheviks are raising their heads again and crawling out of their hiding places. Kerensky certainly lost a golden opportunity to suppress them completely after the July uprising.

Tuesday, September 12
(September 25)

The way some people have fled, abandoning their dogs, is something I simply cannot understand. It seems inconceivable to me that anyone who had a pet dog would rush off without taking it along or else having it humanely destroyed. The streets these days are full of stray dogs, mostly beautiful expensive creatures, accustomed to being well taken care of and petted, now left to provide for themselves as best they can. Some of them still wear handsome collars, bearing the names and addresses of the wretched people to whom they once belonged. It is pitiful to see them foraging in garbage pails — with sides drawn in from hunger, coats all tangled and dirty and eyes full of fear and pain. Despite their downfall most of them have kept their beautiful manners, wagging their tails and smiling pathetically when spoken to. They seem to understand how much we pity them and follow us around hopefully with a trusting look that is heartbreaking. We bring them home and feed them, but then they do not go away, and gradually the yard is filling up with all kinds

of dogs, much to the disgust of the servants. Then also, as everything is so expensive this summer it costs an awful lot to feed our protégés and with new-comers arriving every day we are confronted with quite a problem. What are we to do? We cannot keep them, no one wants them and yet it seems impossible to turn them out into the streets again. Yesterday a magnificent St. Bernard followed me home. She was in a terrible condition of weakness, being hardly able to walk, yet insisting on offering me her paw to shake every time I looked at her. After keeping her several hours I could tell that she was seriously ill, so I took her to the veterinary who said she had cancer in a very advanced stage and had to be put to sleep immediately as nothing could be done to save her. So he chloroformed her while I held the paw that she had gravely put out to be shaken for the very last time. She went under without a struggle, ever so peacefully, and in a few minutes it was all over. I put down the poor kindly paw that would never be offered again and rushed home and wept like a fool. It did seem such a shame to destroy a beautiful creature like that, so gentle and trusting, and yet what else could I do? Undoubtedly she was suffering and would have suffered more each day had she lived, soon reaching the stage when she would not be able to drag herself around any more, slowly dying a horrible death of hunger, thirst and pain.

Today a delightfully ugly dachshund picked us up in the Park and followed us all the way home. He is a very big fellow with large bones that by contrast make his drawn in waist-line appear unusually thin. His collar bears

the name of Jack and he goes wild with joy every time we call him that. Knowing how much the Matron loves dogs, especially dachshunds, I called her up and told her all about Jackie. She immediately fell in love with my description of him and said that he was hired, then and there, for the hospital kitchen to chase the rats away. I am to bring him down first thing in the morning tomorrow and am so pleased I don't know what to do! I told Jack he had been hired as kitchen boy and he actually grinned from ear to ear, as though he really knew what I was talking about.

Wednesday, September 13
(*September 26*)

Am just back from the hospital where I took Jackie and introduced him to his new home. The Matron was delighted with him and the cook gave him such a meal that I'm afraid he'll never even look at a rat again! All the sisters and servants came rushing to see him and all fell in love with him at first sight. I can foretell that having become the pet of several hundred warm-hearted people he'll certainly lead a sweet life. Someone declared he should not be called plain Jack, as that is not dignified enough for such a sedate looking creature, but that henceforth his name should be "Jacob Ivanovitch Jackoulin" — and everyone agreed. So that's his official name now and he responds to it unhesitatingly looking proud as Punch. The other little dachshund "Timka," adopted by the Matron a few days ago, is already flirting desperately with Jacob Ivanovitch. They look so funny together — she so

dainty and small (the inscription on her collar says she has taken seventeen prizes!), he such a great big lumbering fellow who probably never saw a prize in all his life. Another piece of good news is that Dr. R. wants to adopt the fox terrier and will come for him tomorrow. Now if only we could find nine good homes for the nine other waifs what a joy that would be. I have not seen any stray cats yet. Probably people took them away when they fled, or else the cats know better than dogs how to take care of themselves.

Friday, September 15
(*September 28*)

The Conference has begun — the curtain is up and the first act of a new play ready to start. We, of the bewildered public, are all sitting expectantly waiting for something exciting to happen. Will it be drama or comedy this time? What can the unfortunate government expect after the Bolshevik uprising in July and the Korniloff conspiracy in September, each pulling it in a different direction, one to the Left, the other to the Right? Perhaps the bottom will fall out of it now, that being about the only thing that can happen, unless the Left and the Right begin tugging the poor thing all over again.

Sunday, September 17
(*September 30*)

I really should return to the hospital for good now, but Muzzie wants to spend another month here. I know she won't stay one day without me, so I have to remain, as positively she feels much better in Tzarskoe than in

Petrograd. The Matron and Professors are very nice about it and told me I could stay on another month. However I'll have to commute for the more important lectures.

Thursday, September 21
(October 4)

Going backwards and forwards to town so often is a very tedious business and I'll be glad when we return to our winter quarters. Yesterday Kerensky made one of his famous speeches at the Conference urging it to form a Coalition government again. He seems to think that our new Republic is heading for fresh disasters and is in such serious danger that it can only be averted by another coalition. I suppose he's right. If one or the other Extreme Party gets hold of power there'll either be a terrific reactionary movement, that will probably finish in a new Revolution, or else (if the Extreme Left wins) we'll get the new Revolution right away, without the Reactionary interim. Which is best? Looks the same to me — both ways are bad.

Sunday, September 24
(October 7)

The Conference is see-sawing and does not seem to be able to come to any decision. It isn't a bit exciting.

Something positive has to be done about our dogs. They eat an awful lot, bark incessantly so that people complain, also fight — oh how they fight! No one has adopted any, since Dr. R. took the fox terrier and the servants have declared that they won't stay if the dogs do. So Muzzie

and I put our heads together last night and tried to think of some brilliant way of solving our problem. If we turn the poor things loose again they'll undoubtedly perish after suffering a lot, though there might be a chance for one or two to find a good home. On the other hand if we put them all to sleep they'll never suffer again. After a great deal of discussion we have decided that the latter is the best way out. I have seen the veterinary and he thinks it's best too — in fact he says we should bring every stray dog to him instead of taking it home and feeding it. As a member of the Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals I got in touch with headquarters and there they also said that the best way would be to chloroform the dogs. So tomorrow I'll take them over to the veterinary and have him put them all to sleep. He's a kind soul and does his work so perfectly, that they do not suffer in the least.

Tuesday, September 26
(October 9)

It's all over — they're all asleep and I held every single paw. So many paws too — big ones and little ones, some sleek, some fluffy, every paw differently coloured, but all affectionate and trusting. They all went cheerfully, without any premonition and were very polite to the veterinary. Only Bobik, the bull terrier fidgeted and cocked an anxious ear. But positively no one suffered and after the first short struggle they all dropped off to sleep as quickly as possible. When it was over I felt so weak I could have easily died myself, and had the veterinary suggested it — I believe I would have let him put the

mask on my nose too. But who would have held my paws? Oh those paws — I feel every one of them in my hands so distinctly, as if they were still there. On the way home a little bull dog followed me right to the very door. What could I do but let him in and feed him — which starts the whole thing all over again!

Wednesday, September 27
(October 10)

At last the Conference came to a decision and we have a Coalition again. We are not so far away from the time of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly now and, maybe, with a great deal of luck, the new government will last until then!

Sunday, October 1
(October 14)

A burglar got into the house last night taking all the food he could find in the pantry and the "silver" too. But as we were wise enough not to bring any real silver along, only nickel plated "Fraget," I must confess that the robbery has not upset us too much. The burglar evidently wanted us to think that he was at least an anarchist, so he left a sheet of white paper on the dining-room table, bearing a crudely made design of skull and cross-bones, painted in black with the words "This is a warning!" written beneath his gay little sketch. But we are getting quite accustomed to all sorts of strange things happening and are not easily scared any more. We have no valuables in the house — so why worry?

Thursday, October 5
(October 18)

I had to stay in town for a few days on account of some work I was detailed to do in the dispensary and only saw Muzzie for a couple of hours either in the afternoons or in the evenings. The General stayed with her until my return. The weather is lovely, and the Tzarskoe park has been perfectly beautiful with its marvellously coloured foliage that even the destructive soldiers cannot manage to spoil. Today I discovered a really talented young artist, busily painting by the lake and bought for Muzzie quite a few of his water colours, depicting various corners of the park, as souvenirs of our extraordinary summer in Tzarskoe.

Saturday, October 7
(October 20)

The German fleet has been very active in the Baltic Sea, causing a good deal of anxiety. If it came into the Gulf of Finland, would our fleet fight or would the numerous committees of sailors merely talk and form resolutions while the enemy calmly captured Petrograd?

Monday, October 9
(October 22)

Another overnight mushroom growth, supposed to be a forerunner of the Constituent Assembly, and called the "Provisional Council of the Republic," has suddenly sprung to life, Kerensky inaugurating it with one of his speeches. Poor man! — all he seems to do is start some

new form of government using all his great eloquence in a desperate effort to get the thing going. But for some reason, those wretched things never seem to be able to get beyond the preliminary stages, soon showing distressing signs of weakness and disease that invariably end in an untimely death. All those ephemeral Provisional governments, Congresses, Conferences and Councils remind me of the absurd toy I used to buy in my childhood at the country fair, called the "Expiring Mother-in-Law," a little rubber balloon representing an old hag, that first had to be blown up as far as she'd go without bursting, then allowed gradually to expire, shrinking slowly as the air left her and squeaking in the most mournful manner until nothing remained but a wrinkled little heap of coloured rubber. That toy was a great success and the young peasants (probably dutiful sons-in-law) would buy them in such quantities that the air would be filled with the squeaks of the "Expiring Mothers-in-Law," together with the unholy shouts of laughter of the heartless young men. "That's it, old witch, squeak, squeak!" they'd cry gleefully, probably visualizing with a wicked mental eye a squeaking, shrinking mother-in-law of flesh and blood! Just like those toys — the Conferences, Councils, etc., start by being all puffed up — only to end in nothing at all, but a mournful squeak.

Thursday, October 12
(October 25)

There is a good deal of talk about who is going to represent our Country at the Conference of the Allies in Paris.

Naturally every party wants its own delegate to be the spokesman for Russia, which means that there'll be plenty of squabbling until that question is decided. The Bolsheviks seem to be getting stronger all the time and they say that the garrison is becoming more and more Bolshevistic every day. Often now one hears in public places fragments of conversations about giving all power to the Soviets, while the names of Kerensky and other ministers are mentioned with sneers and open disdain. Both the extreme Right and the extreme Left hate Kerensky and we have heard that the Right actually hopes the Bolsheviks will overthrow him and get rid of him and his followers once for all. Then when that dirty work is done — the Right will step in and overthrow the Bolsheviks in their turn, thus clearing the way for a Monarchy that will be protected by a "government of iron." Kerensky's life is certainly no sinecure! All he can do is to ward off the attacks from all sides and try his best to hold on until the Constituent Assembly. He probably has no illusions left and will be only too glad to retire to the comparative privacy of a less conspicuous role where he won't be all the time pursued by a spotlight of animosity, turned on him by all those that wish he were dead.

Saturday, October 14
(October 27)

I was reading my diary to Muzzie yesterday and she said that if it were read by people who did not know my age — they'd think an old woman had written it. "But you've always been older than your age," she added,

"ever since the days when you were a funny little old-fashioned baby. I suppose the reason for that is that you grew up all alone without any children to play with and were always surrounded by grown-up people." And I suppose she's right! Sometimes I do feel very, very old in mind, though my body feels splendidly young.

Monday, October 16

(October 29)

The streets are nasty these days — by that I mean that they have taken on again that unmistakable air of "trouble brewing" that always precedes a new Revolutionary outburst. Soldiers hurry backwards and forwards looking very excited and important, lorries have again appeared carrying mysterious boxes piled high on top of each other, military riders tear down the streets at a mad gallop with a great noise and clatter, while — surest sign of all that something is going to happen — our hospital personnel is once more in a state of ferment. That the Bolsheviks are getting busy can be seen by the evident sympathy of the population towards everything Bolshevistic again. Not so long ago, after the July uprising they were in deep disgrace, hated and hounded and obliged to hide. Now, ever since the Korniloff incident that so seriously discredited the Provisional government — the Bolsheviks have gradually reappeared, slowly but surely gaining strength every day until they became masters of the Soviet on September 19. Since then their power has grown tremendously, together with their popularity, and one can see that clearly reflected in many little things of every day life.

Sunday, October 22
(November 4)

There is trouble in the government again — the War minister having resigned because he thinks that Russia should sign a separate peace. Fine War minister he turned out to be! Meanwhile Trotsky is openly making the most violent speeches, urging the crowds to plunder and murder, while Kerensky stands by and doesn't do a thing about it.

Monday, October 23
(November 5)

Austria has offered Russia a separate peace. I suppose that is what Verhovsky, the "great" War minister, wanted! Each hour seems to bring fresh troubles. The government has again sent for the military cadets to be on duty in all important places in town, which proves that another attack is soon expected.

Tuesday, October 24
(November 6)

There is no doubt about it any longer — we're again facing a terrible crisis. The Bolsheviks are ready any minute to start another uprising and it seems inconceivable that the government does not arrest their leaders. Now is the time for that Council of the Republic to act — though we've heard that its members are quarrelling furiously and cannot agree on any question. Whether it's called Council, Congress, or Conference — it's all the same — no sensible work can be got out of it, only quarrels and fights, while the country is going to rack and ruin.

I did a very stupid thing today and as a result do not feel at all well. Being frightfully thirsty in the Park and seeing a soldier selling some Klioukva water, I bought a glass of it from him and drank it right down in one breath. After I had swallowed the stuff I was struck by its strange taste. Now I feel sick and funny all over. Maybe the creature was gaily selling poison for the hated "bourgeois" — anyhow his drink certainly did not agree with me.

Wednesday, October 25
(November 7)

I've been ill all night and feel disgustingly weak. The doctor says that undoubtedly something was the matter with that water I drank, and has put me to bed with plenty of medicine to keep me company. So I am sitting propped up with pillows like a real invalid, trying to write, though it's quite an effort. To cheer me up Tatiana has been telling me all the news she was able to collect early this morning. First of all she said, "Many stores are closed and have even put up their shutters on account of serious rioting in the streets today." She was unable to buy any coffee either and had to borrow a little from some neighbours as the doctor's orders were that I should drink plenty of coffee and also some wine. Muzzie has just come home with lots of exciting news. She has heard that the Provisional Government and the Council of the Republic are in open conflict, the Council accusing the government of being reactionary, while the government accuses the Council of being too lenient with the Bolsheviks. What a time to choose for a quarrel! Meanwhile the Bolshevik

leaders are sitting safe and sound in their new fortress-like headquarters at Smolny Institute, and probably laughing their heads off at the quarrel between the other two!

Later (same day)

The uprising has really begun, and this is the news so far: Bolshevik troops are now seizing all places of importance in town; several ships of the Baltic fleet have come up the Neva, the sailors openly joining the uprising; the Cossacks, on whom the government had placed such great hopes, have declared themselves to be neutral and won't fight for either side; while the government is in the Winter Palace, protected only by the Cadets and the famous Women's Battalion (I wonder if my Volga girls are there?). Already one of the Ministers has been arrested by the Bolsheviks in the street and dragged off to Smolny. They say there is also a conspiracy among the officers of the Right to arrest Kerensky, overthrow the Provisional government and the Council of the Republic and then fight the Bolsheviks to the very end — that is until the last one is wiped out! And to think that I am ill at a time like this!

*Thursday, October 26
(November 8)*

Kerensky has fled — the Provisional government is overthrown and everything is in the hands of the Bolsheviks — telegraph, telephone, railways, everything, including the great wireless station here in Tzarskoe. The Winter Palace was bombarded last night by the warships on the Neva and finally capitulated, all the Ministers

being arrested and taken to the Fortress! The Women's Battalion is probably in the hands of the Bolshevik soldiers, unless it was mercifully wiped out by the bombardment last night. Tzarskoe is filled with Bolshevik troops and on top of everything I feel so ill I can hardly hold this pencil. Pains, fever, nausea — the doctor says I was undoubtedly poisoned.

*Sunday, November 19
(December 2)*

At last I am able to go on with my diary. I missed it and though Muzzie wrote a few entries she mostly spoke about my horrid illness, instead of describing the political news. Oh, those last weeks in Tzarskoe — will I ever forget them? Half conscious, racked with high fever and pain, as in a nightmare I'd hear the bombs, the machine guns, the whizzing of the bullets, the yells in the street and the whispered conversations around my bed. White forms bending over me, hands gently touching me, hot tears falling on my forehead and softly murmured prayers — I saw and felt and heard everything, though I could not say a word nor move. Then when the fever and the pains passed away and I regained complete consciousness and realized what I had missed — how wretched I was. It's bad enough to be ill without having to miss entirely a historical event as important as this second revolution. Of all the ill luck that was the worst that could befall me, and I'll never get over it, never! The battle between Kerensky's troops and the Bolsheviks, the passing of Tzarskoe from one side to the other, the fighting in the streets,

the great fires started by the bombs, the darkness, the lack of sufficient food, Kerensky's defeat and flight and finally the Bolsheviks' victory — I missed it all, all! But as long as I live I'll remember that strange nightmare, when on my sick bed, plunged into complete darkness, I heard the Revolution sweep by. That was a strange experience of the spirit, that perhaps, after all, was as interesting as witnessing the Revolution in the ordinary way. Anyhow that thought consoles me. Another strange experience was the one that I had at the Tzarskoe station when the orderlies put my stretcher down on the platform as we waited for the train to arrive. My face was partly covered to keep out the glare and the dust, so that I could not see what was happening above me, but I could see sideways and what I saw was again unusual and strange. Feet, feet, numerous feet, large and small, well shod and poorly shod, running, walking, dragging, standing — there they were as in a kaleidoscope, a nightmare of a different kind. Fascinated I watched them, when suddenly a pair of great heavy masculine boots approached my stretcher and the next instant a hand brutally tore the covering off my eyes. A soldier bent over me, his malevolent face full of suspicion. "Is she really ill?" he growled, "or are you smuggling someone away?" Muzzie uttered a little cry, but I heard the Matron's calm voice say, "See for yourself, comrade — can you tell a sick person when you see one? Look." Again that cruel face bent over me — for a second it was quite close to mine, then the man straightened himself up. "It's all right," he said, "she's ill. Cover her up again," and while that was being done, out

of the corner of my eye, sideways again, I saw his great boots move away. Then the train came thundering in, mercilessly shaking my stretcher as it stood on the platform, the whirlwind in its wake blowing the cover off my eyes. "Now I see the *train's* feet," I thought as the enormous wheels of the engine passed by, looming so unusually large from where I lay. Everything from that angle appeared unusual, like things seen in a crooked mirror, where all reflections are distorted. As the wheels of the cars slowly passed me I suddenly remembered Anna Karenina staring at just such wheels in despair, calculating her jump, then throwing herself forward. From where I lay I could picture to myself that scene so clearly that it made me giddy and sick, and I closed my eyes, breathing a sigh of relief when finally the stretcher bearers lifted me off the ground and carried me to the train. That night I had fever again and was ill for two days. Now it's all over and I shall soon be up and about. It's nice to be back in my old hospital room.

Tuesday, November 21
(December 4)

The Matron came to my room this morning and, much perturbed, very seriously informed me that I must stop writing my diary, as it is too dangerous a thing to do on account of the constant raids. It appears that the soldiers have been here several times and have always carried away all the personal letters and papers that they could find, hoping in this way to discover some secret counter-revolutionary plot. In several instances diaries have been found

and confiscated and their owners sternly ordered to stop writing them, under penalty of imprisonment and even death. Sounds absurd, nevertheless it's true, though probably the soldiers that uttered those threats did not know what they were talking about and would be severely reprimanded by their superiors if they found out what the men had said. Anyhow I've got to stop writing and must hide in some safe place all that I've written up to the present unless I want to run the risk of losing it, which I certainly do not. However, I cannot stop writing entirely, so have compromised: I'll hide the diary and write only once in a while instead of doing so constantly. Now for a safe hiding place! I think the attic, where the musty old Hospital records are stowed away, will be the very best place of all. I shall break up my diary into several parts that I'll put in between some particularly old records, of perhaps twenty-five years ago, — records that even no raider would think of disturbing. Then occasionally I'll sneak up to the attic and add to my collection whatever I've written since. I won't even tell the Matron where my papers are so that she will be spared any embarrassment in case they are found out. No one but myself shall know where they are hidden and whoever finds them and reads these lines must remember that this statement is absolutely true: *I* am the one and only person that knows where the diary is hidden and accordingly the responsibility is entirely mine. If anyone is to be punished for this — I am the one and nobody else. Meanwhile I hope there won't be any raids until I am able to get out of bed and climb up into that attic. The Matron says that soon we are going

to have a Commissar at the head of the Hospital, who will act as a go-between, where the Hospital authorities and the political authorities are concerned. In a way she says it will be a relief to have such a go-between provided the man is decent and fair-minded. There are also to be re-elections among the Committee of Sisters, that will no longer be called Committee but "Soviet" of Sisters so as to be entirely up to date. As usual the Big Revolution is being copied in a small way by the Hospital and everything that happens in the great world is reflected here as in a drop of water.

Trotsky is asking for an armistice now, so that all the Powers at war may discuss the situation "*à l'amiable*," while Lenin is appealing to the Mohammedans of the East, urging them to join Russia's revolt against capitalism. How the English will love that, considering the number of Mohammedan subjects they have in India!

Sunday, November 26
(*December 9*)

My diary is safely put away. Yesterday I went up to the attic and hid the manuscript as a dog hides a bone. I found a nice bunch of old papers that looked particularly fusty and musty and beneath them concealed the "treasure." Now I feel much more comfy. It was none too soon, either, as last night we had a nocturnal raid. About eleven o'clock the Hospital was surrounded by soldiers while others searched the place very thoroughly. The Matron took the raiders from room to room and stood quietly as they opened closets, drawers, trunks, suitcases — anything they could

lay hands on that had a lock and key. Again they took quantities of letters and papers that the Sisters, for some reason, had not destroyed and even confiscated photographs, saying that they'd look up the originals and find out whether they were counter-revolutionists or not. They took my photograph album too and gravely gave me a receipt. I wonder if I'll ever see those photographs again, though they told me to come for them in three weeks and promised that I'd get them back. The receipt says — "Received from Citizeness Irina K. S. an album containing twenty-eight photographs." I begged them to leave my baby's picture, explaining that it was the only one of that kind that I had of my little dead son, and that surely a dead baby's photo could not interest them in any way, but they paid no attention to my pleadings and took it too. Then they asked for the wine cellar and were very much disappointed to find only a few bottles, to be used for medicinal purposes. They couldn't believe that the Hospital did not possess a great big wine cellar and searched for it frantically. It appears that two days ago a large number of soldiers broke into the Winter Palace and raided the cellar, getting frightfully drunk and committing all kinds of excesses. Since then they're looking for wine cellars all over town. The raid finished at five o'clock in the morning and we were all worn out when it was over as no one went to bed. They spared the wards this time but said they'd soon be back to search them thoroughly.

Sunday, December 3
(December 16)

For some time the Bolsheviks have been carrying on peace negotiations with the Germans at Brest-Litovsk. Their shameful delegation, under the leadership of an inglorious individual called Joffe, signed an armistice yesterday that is to last until the fifteenth of January — exactly one month. So now, as a climax to all our misfortunes, Russia's new leaders have forced her, poor martyr, to turn traitor to the Allies, which perhaps is the worst thing that could befall a nation of honour. Apparently we are to be spared no shame, no degradation.

Thursday, December 7
(December 20)

Hooligans now rob people in the streets at night and no one is safe after dark. They undress their victims, taking even their shirts from them and murder them if they show the slightest opposition. Sister Nadejda told us that her old uncle was robbed yesterday and came home completely naked and nearly frozen as the night was bitterly cold. Today he has developed pneumonia and is at death's door. This morning I received a little note from my old friend the professor of Saratoff University. It was brought by a girl that had come all the way from Saratoff to deliver it. He writes that though Kerensky had officially given permission to transfer the Library from Troitskoe to Saratoff — the University had not been able to avail itself of the permit for several reasons. First, there had been a lot of

red tape, endless correspondence with railroad officials, followed by all kinds of delays and complications, then the Bolshevik revolution had broken out and now the local authorities in Troitskoe positively refuse to let the Library leave the house. The University even sent a man to Troitskoe to see whether there was any hope of obtaining the Library, but he came back the other day, saying that the place was entirely in the hands of the rabble, that would never allow the Library to be touched. Besides that I got a letter from one of the old servants describing what was going on there. The house is occupied by sailors, he writes, though he doesn't say how they happen to be there. They have stolen everything they could lay hands on — furniture, pictures, china, linen — everything. Of course the first place to be raided was the wine cellar and that was done thoroughly. Great trucks laden with all the household goods have been leaving the house for days, but where the things are being taken to he doesn't know. A few things however were saved by the old servants and taken to Orel (the State Capital) where they will be stored. Muzzie's pastel portrait in the pink dress, my bronze statuette by Paul Troubetzkoi and a few other things, but oh so few. It's a good time to remember the words, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," and to try to believe that everything that has to do with this world is only "vanity of vanities." But when I think of Troitskoe and try to persuade myself that my love for the three hundred year old home of my family is only just another "vanity," I, somehow, cannot really believe that, nor can I see that it is wrong to yearn for the old

place and mourn its loss. For undoubtedly it is lost to us, unless the Bolsheviks are overthrown and property restored. One of the very first things the Soviet did, after seizing power, was to issue a Decree, declaring that private property in "land, forests, rivers and lakes" did not exist any more. On that day (November 8, if I'm not mistaken) all the land that had once been private property became State property and the former landowners lost all rights to sell their estates, or give them away, or deed them to their descendants. Thus, Troitskoe does not belong to us any more! For three hundred years the family owned it, — exactly three hundred years, as it was donated to my ancestor Boris Mihailovitch Skariatine in 1617. For three centuries, generations of Skariatines were born and lived and died there — now it's no longer ours!

Friday, December 15
(December 28)

Really every day we are getting to be more and more like Job! Apparently all our worldly goods are to be taken away from us and we'll be lucky if they leave us even a mound to sit on. I don't know why my mind has become so Biblical these days, but it certainly has: Ecclesiastes, Job, who next? Seriously though, now after taking the land away, the Soviet yesterday (December 27) nationalized the Banks and confiscated all private capital deposited in them. I hurried over to the State Bank (now called the People's Bank) and was told by an impertinent young individual, whom I had never seen there before, that I had no more revenues coming, as my capital had also been

confiscated and therefore wasn't mine any longer but, from now on, belonged to the State. Such a lovely surprise and such a delightful way of imparting the staggering news! Now let me see (as my French teacher used to say "*recapitulons!*"): first of all they took away the land, forests, rivers, lakes, country homes, with everything in them, farms, cattle, rural industries, etc. (whatever the etc. may stand for in this particular case), now they've nationalized the Banks and confiscated private capital — therefore: no more revenues from either land or capital, which practically makes us all paupers. So far good! Then what? Well, I suppose the town houses will be the next to go — private residences I mean — then all personal belongings, then when there is nothing else to nationalize and confiscate, our lives shall be taken, as final payment for the great unforgivable sin of our Class — the sin of having ruled over the People for more than a thousand years.

Monday, December 25
(January 7, 1918)

Christmas Day — so familiar and yet, like everything else these days, so *unfamiliar*, so unreal. As in the past years we have trees in all the wards and presents and entertainments but somehow everything has fallen flat. There is no real Christmas cheer and all attempts to revive it are futile and useless. The trees stand grave and mournful beneath their gaudy trappings of tinsel and gaily coloured glass balls, the presents seem to make no one happy, the entertainments do not entertain one single soul. People in all stages of life seem to be living within themselves,

introspectively, by that I mean that all, whether consciously or unconsciously, appear to be grappling in their minds with problems and thoughts so overwhelmingly perplexing and confusing that they cannot be translated into speech, which makes them all the more tormenting to the poor brains that bear them. That introspective look in the eyes of most people these days strangely enough makes me think of Tolstoy's description of the expression in a pregnant woman's eyes!

1918

Monday, January 1
(January 14)

A New Year! Oh what will it bring? Only twelve months ago we still were talking about Rasputin's death and its various consequences, now, how far away all that seems.

Thursday, January 4
(January 17)

At last the long-awaited-for Constituent Assembly opened today under the presidency of Victor Chernov and with a majority of socialists and mensheviks. From the very start the Assembly has refused to recognize the supremacy of the Soviet and proposes to create a new form of government. What will the Bolsheviks say to that I wonder? they who are now opening their third "All Russian Congress of Soviets," with the purpose of definitely establishing the dictatorship of the working class —

the one and only class worth considering from their point of view. Its slogan is: "He who does not work shall not eat," and those words printed in flaming colours are plastered all over town on enormous posters that no one can help seeing. Another slogan is that "Religion is the opium of the people," a slogan that they seem to be very proud of, cynically exhibiting it as close to the churches as they possibly can.

Friday, January 5
(January 18)

The president of the Central Executive Committee, Sverdlov, made a great speech at the opening of the third congress of Soviets today, denouncing the Constituent Assembly and urging the workmen and peasants to assume definite control and supreme authority over the country. Those words of course were spoken as a challenge to the Constituent Assembly that has clearly shown its total disregard of the Central Executive Committee. Evidently the two bodies are at daggers drawn and a battle royal will probably be the result. Then Lenin made a violent speech followed by Stalin, Commissar of all nationalities of the Republic. Those three men Sverdlov, Lenin and Stalin seem very powerful and rule their party with a rod of iron.

Saturday, January 6
(January 19)

Well, it has happened! There has been a mighty clash, and as a result the Constituent Assembly was dissolved

yesterday by the Bolsheviks after it refused point blank to sign a declaration of the rights of the working people that had been composed by the Central Executive Committee. The unfortunate Assembly was dispersed by force, machine guns having been brought to the Tauride Palace where the poor thing had started its sittings, fully expecting to achieve great political reforms. Two days of existence — what a tiny life it had and what a disappointment it proved to be after all the hopes that had been built around it. Oh well, that ends that! And with it goes the main hope of thwarting the Bolsheviks.

Wednesday, January 10
(January 23)

The other day all those that possessed safety deposit boxes in the Bank were ordered to appear at a certain hour, keys in hand. In case of disobedience awful punishments were promised so that everybody arrived there promptly on time, rattling the keys and looking scared to death. The proceedings were touchingly simple: we were marshalled to our respective safes, briefly ordered to open them and show what they contained. That done, the individual in charge calmly took every single thing out of the safes, without so much as “by your leave” or “thank you.” Documents, valuables, jewels — all were taken out, under our very noses and, when the boxes were properly emptied, we were told that our possessions had been “confiscated and nationalized” and that therefore we could go home, having nothing more to do at the Bank. Needless to say that the keys of the safes were not returned to us,

as we meekly fled out of the safety deposit vault, too dazed to be rebellious, not quite realizing yet that we had just been neatly robbed in broad daylight. It all happened so quickly that most of the unfortunate victims began to grasp the situation only when they found themselves in the street, I being one of the number. As the truth gradually dawned in my slowly working mind I stopped aghast. Heavens above! Why, my diamond necklace, my tiara, my earrings, pearls — all my jewels large and small, more or less valuable — all were taken away. Deeds, documents, everything, even small things that had no monetary value but that I had treasured for sentimental reasons, like a lock of Baby's hair, for instance, his anodyne necklace, my first cheap little watch given to me when I was six years old. As finally we realized what had happened, we began to gather in excited groups, all talking at once, all furious, all protesting. "Let us go back" someone suggested, and back we ran in a wild scramble to get there first. "Now wait a minute, wait a minute," said a soldier at the door, who had been eyeing us for some time with suspicion. "Where are you going, comrades? You cannot go in there without a permit!" and as he spoke he barred the door with his bayonet. "We want to see the president of the Bank, there has been a misunderstanding!" we tactfully cried, deliberately using the word "misunderstanding" with the vague hope that it would help us get in. But the soldier was adamant. "You cannot cross this threshold," he said, firmly fingering a revolver with his other hand. "But," he added, "I'll find out if anyone will come out and speak to you. Stand where you

are and don't dare move," whereupon he opened the great door and disappeared inside. After a few minutes, that seemed like hours, he reappeared, his face grimmer than ever, accompanied by several other soldiers, all armed to the teeth. Hopelessly we stared at the army sent out against us and knew, before the words were spoken, that our cause was lost. "Well, it's as I told you! You cannot go in there and nobody wants to see you," declared the first soldier in a loud voice as again, without looking at anyone, he fingered his revolver. "Go now — go, go!" he suddenly shouted, taking a few steps in our direction, his army closely following him with a great clatter of boots and swords. Slowly we retreated and slowly, very slowly, walked away. No hope left! First we had been robbed by inoffensive looking individuals in civilian clothes, then defeated by a regular army. There was nothing left for us to do, but disappear with as much dignity as we could muster, leaving the spoils behind us. Not a very glorious sensation, I thought, as I trudged along behind the sad looking backs of my comrades in defeat. Such sad looking backs too, with bent heads and stooping shoulders! Some women were crying and a very old lady right next to me was sobbing so hard that she had to stop and sit down on a door-step, while a pretty girl, probably her grand-daughter, fluttered around her pitifully, doing her best to soothe and console the poor old thing. "What's the use of crying?" said a tall young woman on my other side. "This is only the beginning — wait and see what will happen to all of us soon! Then we can cry," she finished gloomily. As I looked at her white

face and desperate eyes I suddenly felt a shiver run down my spine. What indeed is going to happen next, I thought, and the pictures I saw with my mind's eye were anything but reassuring.

Friday, January 12
(January 25)

Well, this morning I went to retrieve my photographs that had been confiscated by the raiders several weeks ago. After waiting for three hours, as usual in a dirty, dingy room with dozens of other people, I was finally admitted to the presence of the Revolutionary Man himself to whom I was to show my receipt for the photos. He was a funny little pudgy fellow, with angry looking eyes and a fierce moustache that bristled *à la* Wilhelm. Silently I handed him my receipt. "Hum, photographs?" he demanded in a jerky, high-pitched voice. "You want twenty-eight photographs, do you?" he continued staring angrily at me. "Yes, please," I answered politely pretending not to notice his furious glares, though he was a horrid little thing and it wasn't easy to be decent to him. "All right," he grumbled "twenty-eight photographs. . . . Let me see, where are they? Hey, comrade Petroff, look in that drawer and see if you can find a package containing twenty-eight idiotic photographs that had been taken from citizeness K. during the raid at the X. hospital a few weeks ago. So you want your photographs," he went on addressing me again in a tone of voice that seemed to be getting angrier all the time. "All right, you'll get them, though I cannot see why anyone should want to be bothered with

photographs — stupid things anyway.” “That depends on the point of view,” I began, but he interrupted me with a furious, “Don’t argue with me and don’t say another word if you want to get your package.” So I swallowed the rest of my sentence and went on standing by his table, silent but furious by now, as furious as the man himself. Luckily comrade Petroff, a thin, sickly looking boy of perhaps eighteen, found the package bearing the words, “Twenty-eight photographs to be returned to citizeness K. on presentation of receipt number 739,” and, after signing a paper saying that I had received the twenty-eight photos — I left the room rejoicing that that ordeal was over. But when I reached home and opened the package, lo and behold, to my dismay out tumbled twenty-eight photographs of people that I had never seen in my life before and, oh such homely looking people too! I sat down and simply roared with laughter! What a collection they had given me by mistake and what an absurd thing to happen to anyone. I laughed until I felt sick and weak, I don’t remember ever laughing so hard in all my life before! I laughed until I cried, my sides aching and my head, behind the ears, ready to split. Several of the students hearing me laugh came in to find out what on earth had happened that was so very funny and when I told them shrieked with laughter too. There we sat, a group of supposedly serious medical people, laughing and laughing like a bunch of silly school girls, getting positively hysterical. Finally, having calmed down a little, I shoved the twenty-eight photos back into the envelope in which they had come and putting on my hat and coat ran back to

the horrid place where I had spent half the day with such unexpected results. Again they made me wait for hours, until desperately I thought I'd never get to see the man before closing time. However, just as I was giving up all hope, I was readmitted to his horrid presence. "Look! You gave me the wrong photographs," I cried breathlessly. "These are not mine! Why I've never seen all these people before!" "Well what of it?" inquired the nasty little fellow sneeringly. "What did you expect? You were given a receipt for twenty-eight photographs that had been taken from you and you got twenty-eight back. What more do you want? Your receipt certainly did not specify whose likenesses they were, did it? No! Well then what have you to complain about? Twenty-eight were taken and twenty-eight returned, so everything is in good order. The idea of coming back to bother me! Go away and don't dare come back again." For a minute I couldn't believe that the creature wasn't joking. Then as I saw that he was in deadly earnest and angrier than ever, I went out boiling with rage, longing to wring his beastly little neck and wondering how on earth I could have laughed, less than an hour ago, at such a deliberate insult. Of course I hadn't realized then that it was an insult. I thought it was all a ridiculous mistake, but how I hate myself now, for ever having laughed.

Sunday, January 21

(February 3)

Such excitement all day long! Ever since early morning the Hospital has been in an uproar. It started at seven

o'clock, when a large number of soldiers suddenly arrived, fully armed and surrounded the Hospital closing all the outer doors and forbidding anyone to leave the building or enter it. We were at breakfast and couldn't understand what it was all about, as the soldiers, after surrounding the Hospital and barring the street entrances, didn't seem to do anything further. There they stood, as though guarding a prison, but not starting anything else. At first we thought that they had come to raid the place, but after a while, seeing them stand quietly at their "posts," we began to get interested. After all a raid is nothing to get excited about — we are much too blasé for that — but this was something new, therefore intriguing. After breakfast the Matron sent for us all and told us to go on about our duties as usual, not to pay any attention to the soldiers outside. "Something is bound to happen soon," she concluded, "but until then keep to your routine and don't let anything upset you. Remember the sick people depend on you entirely and your first thought must be for them. Above all, remain calm and collected. No excitement, no panic, please. Don't forget that you are soldiers of the Red Cross and do your duty to the very end." So off we scattered all over the Hospital to our various occupations, outwardly trying to be as calm as possible, but inwardly very much excited. An hour passed and nothing happened — then another hour. From time to time we'd peep through the curtains to see if anything new had begun, but no, all was quiet outside as the soldiers made no noise and stood very decently, not even smoking or talking. Their behaviour was really surprisingly good, and that worried us all the more. "I don't

like their attitude, I don't like it at all! " said our Superintendent over and over again. " They are too quiet, too decent. I am afraid we are all in great danger and must be very careful. Better stay as close to the patients as possible, girls, that is the safest thing for you to do," and we obeyed, trembling from excitement. However, a little before nine o'clock, our Hospital church bell began to ring for Mass and a few minutes later came word from the Matron that all the young sisters, probationers and students were to come to church at once, while our places in the wards would be taken by the old white-haired Sisters, most of whom are retired, pensioned and live in the Retreat for Aged Sisters in one of the Hospital wings. As soon as we were relieved by the " Old Brigade " (as we call them), much to the amazement of the patients who could not understand what was going on, we went up to church, where we found the Matron standing by the door anxiously watching all the young women as they came in. Twice she sent for girls that had not yet arrived and only when we were all in church "*au grand complet*" and the great glass doors closed behind the last girl, did she seem relieved, like a hen that has collected her chickens and found none missing. " This is sanctuary and you are all safe here," she whispered to me as I passed her. " But are we? " I asked Tamara L., taking my accustomed seat next to her. " Will they respect a church any more than any other place if their intentions are bad? After all, these times are far worse than the Middle Ages when they *did* respect sanctuaries . . . what do you think? " " I think we are all going to be killed," she answered solemnly and glanc-

ing at her white face and staring eyes I saw that she truly believed what she was saying. It was interesting to watch all those girls and see how differently they reacted to the one and same emotion. Some were white as sheets, others rosy red; some eyes were shining brightly — excited, interested, fearless — while others were wide open with terror, or full of tears, or stony and expressionless, as though they had had a shock and didn't care what happened anyway. My own cheeks were burning and little shivers kept going down my back. My hands were clammy and I had a funny, sickish feeling inside. As far as I was concerned I can truthfully say that I was terribly interested and terribly scared. As the service began and the choir softly sang the familiar hymns and prayers the nervous tension suddenly broke. Down went the girls on their knees, their foreheads touching the ground, some crying but all praying with exceptional fervour. It was a lovely sight to see them in their white veils all bending low as they prayed. They made me think of white flowers swaying in the wind, the grass green colour of the great carpet making the illusion all the more complete. The Matron stood in her usual place, a little ahead of all the girls, erect, proud and fearless, a truly splendid figure of a woman born to lead and command. Half the service was over when all of a sudden we heard a terrific commotion in the main hall below, followed by the tramp, tramp of heavy feet coming up the stairs. The next minute through the glass doors we could see the soldiers arriving, four abreast, gathering on the landing, crowding at the church doors but not opening them. There they stood, staring at us as though we were

caged animals, shoving each other, whispering, laughing, leering, pointing their dirty fingers at us, making faces and winking broadly. But for some reason they stayed outside the doors, not even attempting to open them. Petrified with terror we stood still, not daring to move, trying to follow the Matron's example by looking straight ahead of us, without as much as another glance in the direction of the soldiers. Again we were in the grip of an overpowering nervous tension, again we felt as though something were going to snap then and there. But at that very point, when the strain was becoming unbearable, old Father Pafnuty suddenly left the altar and, coming up to the very edge of the top step, faced the congregation. "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost," he began and made the sign of the Cross. "By special dispensation of the Metropolitan, with whom one of the members of our choir just got in touch by telephone, you my children, are allowed to partake of Holy Communion at this service, even though you have all had something to eat this morning and are not prepared according to the usual rites. However, just before Communion I shall prepare you by having a general Confession, so get ready at once and do not forget to thank the Lord for this special act of mercy and grace." Again the nervous tension snapped and again the girls fell on their knees face forward, prostrated in an agony of prayer. Everything was forgotten — soldiers, danger, terror — in the overwhelming importance of those moments of preparation, and when Father Pafnuty came out for the general Confession all the faces around me, though white and strained — all bore the stamp of

joyful expectation and peace, while an inner light shone in their eyes, making them supernaturally beautiful. "So this is how the early Christians felt in the Catacombs!" I thought as Father Pafnuty began the general Confession, first saying the prayer preceding it, then with a splendid crescendo, naming the various sins, while on all sides the Confessions were being softly whispered, filling the church with a sound like the rustle of autumn leaves. It was a wonderful moment to live through! Never having attended a general Confession before, I was shaken to the very depths of my being, as it made on me an impression that I'll never forget to my dying day. The inspired face of old Father Pafnuty, the quiet beauty of the church, the intense religious fervour, bordering on fanaticism of the girls, the whispered Confessions and the truly God-like atmosphere on this side of glass doors — and then the hellish, fiendish faces on the other side of those doors — oh, what contrasts that picture presented! It didn't seem as though we possibly could be living through such an episode in the twentieth century, an episode reminiscent of the early days of Christianity, but certainly unbelievably incongruous in our times. It was all like a dream, beautiful in one way, hideous in another, and strange beyond description. After the magnificent prayer, absolving us all collectively of our sins, we advanced towards the altar and received the Holy Communion. Never have I seen such happy faces as I did after the Communion in that church! It was like Easter night, everyone embracing in a state of exaltation, everyone truly happy with a happiness not of this world. Had we been told that we were going to die

that very minute I firmly believe that we would have gone to our deaths in an ecstasy of happiness as though death were the crowning glory of life. Now I can understand what spirit moved the martyrs and why they went so fearlessly through unspeakable tortures to their death. Yes, death in that frame of mind is something glorious to look forward to and nothing to be afraid of! When the service was over the Matron went to the glass doors and threw them open. "What are you doing here? What do you want?" she asked the soldiers, as they crowded around her. "Why do you disturb us when we are in church praying?" "But we did not disturb you then," answered the soldier nearest to her. "And this is what we want: we want you all to come along with us — all the young and pretty ones I mean," he added with a horrid leer. "But by what right are you doing this?" demanded the Matron calmly. "Show me your credentials first." "Here they are, here they are, my beauty," cried the soldier producing a filthy paper that he shoved under her very eyes. "See here," he continued tapping the paper with his dirty forefinger, "it says that by order of the Local Soviet the Sisters of the X hospital are to be arrested and brought to the X barracks by twelve o'clock today, where they will be kept until further orders — signed Commissar Garfunkel. Now do you see?" "Yes I do see," answered the Matron "and as far as you're concerned your papers are in order. But let me tell you that I am not satisfied. The Local Soviet indeed! How dare it arrest us for no reason whatsoever? And how are we to leave a hospital full of sick people entirely dependent on us? No, that cannot be, and

I am going to telephone the Central Executive Committee of the main Soviet and find out what they say about this." The soldier looked perplexed and abashed. He evidently had not expected such determined opposition and from a mere woman too! "Let me pass," ordered the Matron, "I am going to telephone Comrade Ouritzky himself this very minute." The name of Ouritzky seemed to act like magic. The soldiers fell back as the Matron, with her head high up in the air, passed through their ranks, down the stairs on the way to her office. As I happened to be near her I followed, together with Sister Vera, vice president of the Soviet of Sisters, and the soldier that seemed to be in charge of the proceedings. Entering her room the Matron without losing a second went right up to the telephone, took the receiver off the hook and, naming a number, stood there looking very determined and defiant as she waited for her call to go through. "This is the President of the Soviet of Sisters of the X hospital and I wish to speak to Comrade Ouritzky immediately on very important business connected with dangerous counter-revolution," she said when she got the number. "Hello, hello, is this Comrade Ouritzky himself? Well this is Comrade T.," she said calmly, calling herself that so as to mollify the great Bolshevik from the very start. "Listen Comrade, more than a hundred soldiers have come to the hospital and, by order of the Local Soviet, intend to arrest me and a great number of my sisters, probationers and students — all the young and pretty ones, they say. No reason for the arrest at all! Do you know anything about it? Is it done by your order? No? It is not? Well then, Comrade, it's pure

counter-revolution for they are acting without your knowledge and I ask you to look into this at once. You will? Good! Thank you. Here," she said turning to the soldier, "Comrade Ouritzky wants to speak to you," and with a gleam of triumph in her eyes she handed him the receiver. "Yes Comrade," we heard the soldier say deferentially in quite a humble voice, "Yes indeed. Very well, very well. Oh yes, it must be a misunderstanding. All right, we'll wait. Good-bye, Comrade. Well," he said, hanging up the receiver and looking very glum, "you've won, you clever woman! Comrade Ouritzky says he'll take this matter into his own hands and meanwhile we're to wait here until he communicates with the Local Soviet and we receive further orders from him." "Good," said the Matron sternly. "Now go and wait in the hall, and keep your soldiers in order please as we do not wish to be disturbed any more. Remember what Comrade Ouritzky said." And the soldier meekly withdrew to the hall where we heard him tell the others to keep quiet and wait as that was the wish of Comrade Ouritzky. Soon a message came from the Local Soviet, ordering the soldiers to report at once and they departed very precipitately, leaving us once more in triumphant possession of the hospital. The unexpected ending of this alarming episode was like a miracle in every way. First, the Matron's brilliant inspiration to telephone Ouritzky, then the amazingly lucky fact that he happened to be in his office and that she was allowed to speak to him personally, and finally her clever way of making the man side with her. Sheer determination and luck carried her right through and certainly enabled her to win a victory.

Friday, February 2.
(February 15)

We have a Commissar now at the head of the hospital! He's a Lithuanian, a Bolshevik and quite an important personage in the Communist party, so we've heard. When he was appointed, we nearly had fits and waited for him with terror, fully expecting something awful to happen to all of us in the way of persecutions and arrests. But when he finally did appear we were most agreeably surprised. Instead of the long-haired, shaggy, dirty individual we had expected to see, in came a quiet, well-dressed, well-bred man of about thirty-five, tall, slender, with fair hair and blue eyes and the most kindly manner. Nothing of the terrorist about him; on the contrary, it would be hard to find a gentler soul and the fact that he's a Bolshevik seems unbelievable. Evidently he is one of their best types, an idealist to whom Communism is a religion and not just a stepping stone for attaining selfish ends. No, most decidedly he is not an opportunist, like so many others, that follow the changes of Fortune, monarchists yesterday, Bolsheviks today, anarchists tomorrow and monarchists again the day after — weather-cocks that twist and turn around the way the wind blows. After dreading his arrival, we are now very glad that he is here, as he will certainly protect us against the invasion of Local Soviets, soldiers, raiders and such like horrors. It appears that he is in close touch with the Central Executive Committee and seems to be powerful enough to shield the hospital from all danger. The Matron is delighted with him, as he treats her very deferentially (just the way a young man should treat an

older woman, she says approvingly), constantly asking her advice about matters concerning the daily life of the Hospital and not undertaking anything without hearing her opinion first. Altogether a treasure that Commissar of ours. He really works hard with the most satisfactory results. For instance, even our food is much better now, thanks to his intervention, and we do not get up from table as hungry as we used to the last two months. Three cheers for our Commissar, I cry, sitting on a heap of dusty papers in the attic, sneezing every time I move while I write this in my diary.

Saturday, February 10
(February 23)

One of our patients told me a queer story last night, as I was on duty at her bedside. She is a nice old woman that has recently been operated, suffers a great deal, and has to have someone with her all night long as she cannot sleep. She is such a plucky old soul and I've grown to like her very much. She likes me too and enjoys telling me long stories, of which the most extraordinary is the one she told me last night about her only son whom she adores — a middle-aged highly respectable professor of mathematics, devoted to his work and family, an excellent citizen and the kindest, most inoffensive man in the whole world. Well, two months ago as he was standing on a street corner peacefully smoking and talking to a friend of his, he suddenly noticed a large number of unfortunate "bourgeois," all under arrest and evidently on their way to prison, being hustled along down the middle of the



ARRESTED BOURGEOIS ON THEIR WAY TO PRISON

street by a troop of Red guardsmen, of the worst cut-throat type. As he watched the procession go by, sadly wondering what fate had in store for the poor prisoners, he suddenly felt two heavy hands descend on his shoulders and, before he could realize what was happening, found himself pushed off the sidewalk right into the very midst of the passing prisoners, a soldier on either side of him holding his arms and yelling in his ears threats of the most frightful punishments if he dared show any resistance. "But what, what, why?" . . . was all he was able to stammer, as they dragged him along, while another soldier behind him kicked and beat him with some heavy thing, sometimes right on his head. Dazed, bewildered, hurt, he stumbled along, twice falling on his face while they beat him all the harder, until he began to pray for death. He must have lost consciousness then, for the next thing he remembers is the prison cot, where he lay bleeding, bruised and aching all over, in an enormous cell, with dozens of men all around him. And there he was kept for weeks and weeks, unwashed, unshaven, his clothes full of vermin, half starved, not knowing why he had been imprisoned and unable to get in touch with anyone outside. Finally he was taken seriously ill and transferred to the prison hospital where for the first time in weeks and weeks he was bathed, shaved, put in a clean bed and given some decent food. And there, also, he soon found out why he had been imprisoned as, strangely enough, one of the hospital orderlies happened to know his story, having heard it from a friend of his, a soldier that belonged to the prison guard. It appears that on that fateful day,

when the poor professor stood on the sidewalk watching the prisoners go by, one of them had just escaped, and the soldiers, terrified at the thought of bringing to the prison authorities only 199 men when they had been entrusted with two hundred, and knowing that they would have to pay dearly for that one man's getaway, decided then and there that the only thing for them to do was to catch some innocent passer-by and make him join the other prisoners, thus bringing to the authorities the correct number, i.e. 200, and avoiding any unpleasantness that most certainly would have descended on their heads had they arrived with only 199. Thus, my poor old patient's son happened to be the innocent victim and suffered terribly for two months, his family not being able to find out where he was, as in the Prison Register he went under the name of the man that had escaped and not under his own name. And that was the reason why no one believed him, when, being always called by a name that was not his own, he'd protest and say that he was not "Mr. Jones" at all, but Professor X, famous mathematician and savant. Members of his family had come many times to the prison asking if he were there and had always received the same answer, that "No, Professor X was not on the prisoner's list," which made the situation all the more tragic as they could not bring him any food, nor try to see him, nor start any action for his release. There he was, living under another's name, unable to persuade anyone that he was there by mistake and apparently lost, without any hope of proving his identity. Finally

with the doctor's help the matter was straightened out and the poor man set free after a terrible experience that he'll probably never forget as long as he lives.

Saturday, February 17
(March 2)

I am dreadfully worried about the Parents! It's so hard for them to get any decent food these days and the stuff I bring them is hardly good for old people. Potatoes, cabbages, beets, black bread and horse flesh is all that I seem to be able to find, though I try frantically to discover some milk and eggs. Yesterday I heard of a woman who secretly sells milk at exorbitant prices, but when I went to see her, the stuff she had was so bad I simply couldn't take it. It looked like chalk and water and I was afraid it might harm my poor old people instead of doing them any good.

A whole year has swept by since the first day of the revolution and what changes, what unbelievable changes it has brought. Here we are, living in a Soviet Republic, all our belongings taken away from us, poor as church mice. All around me I see desperate misery, and sorrow. The only thing to do these days is work, work as hard as possible, and I am so thankful that my medical studies and duties take up most of my time, leaving me at the end of the day too tired for anything but bed and sleep. Somehow this Revolution is no longer interesting. All it has done is to bring disorder, hunger, sordidness and sorrow into our lives and I am beginning to get so weary of it.

As I walk down the streets and see the expression of hopeless misery in nearly all eyes, except those of Bolsheviks and soldiers, it seems to me that Joy is dead and gone forever, while only Misery thrives. I have reached the point now, where I hate to go out and see those suffering eyes, full of anguish, hopelessness and utter despair. One looks at them and thinks, "Oh, how can I help?" knowing perfectly well that no human being can help any more, that stage being past, probably forever.

Sunday, March 4

(March 17)

Only the churches seem to be unchanged and as I enter our Hospital church or the great Cathedral of Alexander Nevsky where I go oftener and oftener these days, my troubles seem to leave me at the threshold and I find inside all the peace and beauty that is so utterly lost everywhere else. Evidently many people feel the way I do, for the churches are always crowded to overflowing and the congregations stand patiently through the very long services, apparently loath to go home when finally they are over. In fact the longer the services the better they seem to like it, even though the all-night services sometimes last twelve hours, beginning early in the evening and ending at dawn with general Confession followed by Communion, reminding one again of the first days of Christianity. The Metropolitan seems to think that we should all be prepared for the unexpected death, that can overtake us at any moment and therefore conducts these night

beautiful as his great choir is justly considered one of the finest in Russia. There is no electric glare, only the candles and lampadas burn softly in front of the Holy Icons, the air is warm and fragrant with incense, the sermons are truly inspired, and above all a wonderful feeling of peace pervades the whole church. The spirit of old Russia, though dead everywhere else, is still alive in the churches, where it seems to have taken refuge as in a last stronghold. I cannot explain how soothing it is to hear the familiar words of the prayers and hymns that we have known since our childhood, to see the grave eyes of the same old Saints looking down on us from beneath the silver and gold of their jeweled crowns, to listen to great orators really inspired by the mystic beauty of the hour. We stand all night long, hardly ever sitting down, and yet when we go home we are not tired, not in the least — on the contrary we seem fitter than ever for the day's work.

Thursday, March 15
(*March 28*)

I've been through a dreadful experience. I've seen a church desecrated and the memory of what I saw makes me ill and shaky. It happened during yesterday's all-night service. First the church was surrounded, then hundreds of soldiers broke in deliberately keeping their caps on, talking, laughing, swearing, smoking, spitting loudly everywhere. They came up the aisle to the altar where the Metropolitan and twelve assisting Bishops and Archimandrites were officiating and, pushing them aside, prodded the golden coverings of the altar with their

bayonets (to see if any fire-arms were concealed, so they explained) then threw cigarette ashes in the Communion Cup and finally spat into it, throwing it on the ground as they left the altar on their way out. The congregation, paralysed with horror, did not move at first. Then suddenly it broke loose, a multitude of people maddened by the outrage, all acting under the same impulse of boundless indignation. In a second the soldiers were stopped, surrounded and would probably have been torn to pieces alive (despite the fact that they were armed and the congregation was not), had not the Metropolitan come forward and called out in a loud voice the words of Christ, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do," adding, "Let them go in peace and do not leave your places for we shall proceed with the ceremony." He was obeyed, of course, and the service continued as if nothing had happened, though personally I was shaking from head to foot and even now have not recovered from the horror of that episode.

Here the diary is broken off, due to the fact that in my haste to save the manuscript before escaping from Russia I overlooked quite a number of copy books hidden beneath old documents in the attic — books containing entries that covered the period of about a year from March 17, 1918, until January 24, 1919. Those copy books must still be there unless they were discovered and confiscated during a raid after my departure. The spring months of

1918 were mostly filled with preparation work for the examinations, which, surprisingly enough, the majority of us managed to pass, despite the fact that conditions were already becoming so hard that to study in a perpetual state of undernourishment and cold was anything but easy. That summer we did not go to Tzarskoe but remained in Petrograd, the Parents at home and I in the Hospital. It was a dreary, uneventful summer with conditions in every phase of life becoming worse and worse. Nearly everybody we knew had left Russia that year, but we stayed on for the following reasons: my Parents because they thought they could save their household possessions if they went on living quietly at home in Petrograd: I — because I wanted to go on with my medical work at the hospital and also see all I could of the Revolution.

1919

January 11
(January 24)

At last there is hope that we'll get some wood for the hospital, our Commissar having obtained permission to tear down one of the wooden houses on the 7th Rojdestenskaia Street and use it for fuel. It's a large frame house that belonged to an old merchant until the day it was given to us. Quite simply the poor old fellow, who is past eighty, was ordered by the Soviet to abandon his house within twenty-four hours, at the same time receiving kindly permission to move into two small rooms in

the house next door but one. When Sister Maria and I thoughtlessly ran over in great glee to look at "our" house and gloat over it, we found its old master crying helplessly and bitterly, as only very old people can cry, his long white beard completely disappearing in the shadowy depths of a huge and venerable trunk over which he was bending with obvious difficulty, as he packed his queer old possessions with trembling hands. Conscience-stricken at having intruded and yet sick with pity, we stood on the threshold of his room, unable to go away, wanting to say something kind and yet at a total loss for words of consolation. But he never even glanced at us and went on packing and sobbing, the very picture of old age in despair. From time to time, between the sobs which shook his gaunt old frame, he'd mutter something we couldn't quite grasp, something about not being allowed to die in the house where he had been born — anyway they were words to that effect, and before we knew it, we were both weeping too, I personally having an awful time sniffing as I had forgotten my hankie at home. "Look here," said Sister Maria, "we've simply got to cheer him up. Let's run back and get him some tea and sugar! Oh yes, and you might give him that muffler you've been knitting all these months." So off we rushed to the hospital, triumphantly returning in less than half an hour with two microscopic packages of tea and sugar, the muffler and other gifts sent by the sisters. With our arms full we burst into the old fellow's room again, this time shouting at the top of our voices, "See what we've got for you, see!"

bled towards us to see what we had brought him. "Tea, sugar, muffler, sweater, warm pants, tobacco, pretty pillow," we cried as we shoved the various articles into his arms until he stood there looking like old Father Christmas laden with parcels. "And that's not all," said Sister Maria breathlessly, "We'll help you pack and move and then we'll arrange your new rooms so nicely that you'll just love them. We'll bring you lots of new things too — lots! Just wait and see," she finished gleefully as he suddenly burst into a loud chuckle of delight. We had to make him some tea then and there, he declared, as he hadn't had any for several weeks and while we prepared it for him he sat in an arm-chair all dressed up in the new sweater, new muffler, new slippers and cap. Across his knees lay the new wadded pants, while he rested his head on the embroidered pink pillow and gazed lovingly at the pinch of sugar and bit of bread. One can see that he has been used to nice things all his life and that the present state of affairs has left him as bewildered and helpless as a child. Really he's an awful dear and we had a lovely time fussing over him. Early tomorrow a lot of our students are coming to help him pack and move. His house is full of old things and goodness knows how we'll get them into his new quarters. Of course there's a lot of old trash, but there are good things too that should be saved.

January 12

(January 25)

We've moved our old gentleman and fixed him up so prettily in his new rooms that it's quite a pleasure, and as

much fun as arranging a large doll's house the way we did when we were children. Everything that was dilapidated and worthless we kindly gave away to the neighbours (with his permission, of course), then the better things we crowded into his rooms and made them look nice and comfy. And how pleased he is! I don't think he's had such a good time for ages, and the way he potters around talking to himself and chuckling is lovely. The entire hospital has adopted him and from now on he'll never be lonely and forsaken any more, never! Why I even caught Professor X. sitting and chatting with him while Dr. B. was filling his pipe as though he were performing some very delicate operation. Now with an easy conscience we can break down that old house and at last get a little warmth into our rooms.

We all get about one half a cord of wood for each room. It will be wonderful to be warm again! So far the temperature in our rooms has been "what God gives," that is: the same as out of doors. If it's warm outside, we're warm inside; if it's cold outside, we're cold inside. And the indoor cold is so much worse than the outdoor, for when one goes out one moves and that, of course, creates warmth, but to sit in a cold room is terrible, even though one wears a fur coat and cap and high snow-shoes, as we all do. In most rooms the walls are streaky from dampness and no one can any longer sleep between sheets, as they are always too cold and clammy. If I get in between those sheets I shiver and shake and cough all night long unable to sleep a wink. So now I sleep between blankets and so do all the others, for that's the only way to keep

warm. Old Sister R. even puts a chair on her bed at night so as to keep the blankets down as firmly as possible. However I can't see how that chair helps, as I've tried it myself (one follows any suggestion nowadays) and found that it was nothing but an uncomfortable nuisance that, of course, did not add one speck of warmth. It's dreadful to wash in that cold too, and I suspect that many people simply don't do it, as they look pretty grey on careful examination. But then soap is so difficult to get these days, having become a rare article of luxury, and when one is obliged to drag in from the street buckets and buckets of snow and ice that have to be melted in order to obtain sufficient warm water to wash with, and when one has to face the unspeakable misery of peeling off one's numerous, fantastic revolutionary-time garments in an ice-cold room that hasn't been heated for more than a year — then one really thinks twice before starting the complicated process of efficient washing.

The little *pechourkas* (or microscopic iron stoves about the size of a small child's drum) that we all possess now, are such wretched little brutes! Mine isn't larger than the ordinary hot water kettle and has to be stuffed every few minutes with tiny kindling sticks, that hardly radiate any warmth at all after their first flare-up. We must look extremely grotesque, hugging our horrid *pechourkas* and hoping against hope that finally some day a miracle will happen that will force them to give out some heat. Then we have the "Primuses" too — also nasty things, though their nastiness is of a different kind than that of the *pechourkas*. As long as they work they're

all right, but unfortunately they all have the unpleasant trick of suddenly refusing to get started and then we have to tuck them under our bony arms and sally forth down the street to the man who specializes in Primus repairs. Besides being so capricious and unreliable those Primuses smell awful too, whether in action or not. You can always tell that there is a Primus somewhere around (like a goat) by the atrocious odour that invariably accompanies it, and when there are four Primuses to one room, as most of the four-in-one-room students have — well then everyone is out of luck. What with the unheated rooms, the dampness, the *pechourkas* and Primuses — life is anything but pleasant.

Then there is the question of darkness too. As we have no electricity these days nor any alcohol or petroleum-burning lamps, not even candles, we're obliged to content ourselves with little home-made burners that are more like night-lights than anything else, as each consists of a glass filled with oil in which floats a wick. Oil being terribly expensive and not so easy to find either, we usually gather around such a "lamp" — as many people as possible — first for the sake of economy so as to save the precious oil, then also to keep warm, for we huddle closely together, one blanket or rug covering the knees of two or three girls and one shawl covering the same number of backs. The light of such a lamp is so weak that one cannot possibly read or write or sew. The only thing to do is talk and play games, and that is what we mostly do, besides singing and knitting a little. There we sit through the long dark winter afternoons and eve-

nings — a group of pale-faced, thin, shivering girls, all dressed in heavy overcoats with fur caps drawn over the ears, and high felt snow-boots, mostly full of holes, on our feet. Over all that we wear the blankets and shawls, and yet we're never warm. Somehow the cold and damp of those unheated rooms seems to penetrate to the very marrow of our bones, that no crackling *pechourkas* or roaring Primuses can ever stimulate to any comforting degree of warmth.

The picture we present is really worth describing, for everywhere one sees the same thing without any variation, no matter where one goes. In a dark, damp room, full of ghostly shadows, stands a table bearing the new-fangled "lamp," that casts a small circle of the most dismal, flickering light. Around the table, sideways, sits a group of people, each member of the group busily trying to keep up a fire in his or her own private *pechourka*. Sometimes a Primus roars on the table and then some very weak tea or hot water is passed around, while small pieces of bread (a strange mixture of moss and other mysterious ingredients) are eaten with bits of dry fish, called *vobla*, consisting mostly of sharp little bones covered with salt. Both bread and fish have started a new disease that creates tiny ulcers in the alimentary tract, due to the fact that one swallows too many of those sharp little bones and too many microscopic splinters of bark often found in the "bread." That new disease is becoming very widely spread and the symptoms are easily diagnosed. Scurvy is quite common too and so is anaemia. It's really interesting to see how hunger affects people

differently; some are so emaciated, they're nothing but rattling skeletons covered with skin, while others swell up in such a way as to seem positively fat. I belong to the last category. My cheeks are ever so round, but if I press my fingers on them, little holes like dimples appear, that last for a long, long while. Also when I bend down those cheeks of mine feel so heavy, as though they had water in them, which must be the case, for after I've straightened myself up, their bloated appearance is really quite startling. Out of doors they take on some colour, which makes them look all the more unnatural, as around the pink area the skin is frightfully yellow. Oh, undoubtedly we are all beautiful to look at — Yea, visions of beauty for poets to describe.

But the worst sufferers of all are the hospital patients, for besides being ill, they're as cold as we are and obliged to eat the same food that we do — whether it kills them or not. Positively there isn't anything else for them to eat except dried *vobla*, herring, *kascha*, potatoes and that terrible bread, all of which they consume with fatal results. They die like flies and nothing can be done about it. No matter what their illnesses are, they all get the same "diet," and we feel like criminals when we bring in their poisonous trays and urge them to eat! The operating rooms are cold as ice and many surgical patients contract pneumonia by being exposed to this arctic temperature. Then also, as we have no electricity nor any other kind of civilized lamps, emergency operations have to be performed when it is dark by the light of candles held right over the open wounds for the surgeons to see what they're

doing — candles that flare and flicker and drip! Medicines have become ever so scarce, instruments cannot be replaced as there are none in reserve, surgical dressings have to be used with the greatest economy possible. Altogether it is as though civilization had suddenly died, obliging us slowly in every phase of life to revert to the primitive state of things.

January 14
(*January 27*)

Many people eat horse flesh when they are lucky enough to get it, but that is something I cannot swallow, no matter how hungry I am. The dreadful sweetish smell of horse flesh makes me so sick that I have to leave the dining-room whenever the disgusting stuff is served. Dry fish, potatoes and *pcheno* are the main items of my none too varied menu, and though the potatoes and *kascha* are really quite filling in a way, still the trouble with them is that that feeling of having had enough to eat doesn't last long at all. At first one feels all puffed up, too much so to be comfortable, then an hour later one is hungry again. Oh hunger is a terrible thing! As I go down the streets and see that ghastly kaleidoscope of unnaturally thin or unnaturally bloated faces, I feel I'm living in a nightmare impossible to describe. Many of the passers-by are so weak, that they creep alongside of the houses with hands outstretched towards the walls, so as to steady themselves as they go. Every now and then they fall down and remain lying or sitting on the sidewalk until they gain sufficient strength to get up again and continue their

painful progress. No one helps them any more, for such scenes occur so frequently as to be quite in the natural order of things. But no matter how hardened one has become, one cannot get accustomed to the pitiful crying of very old people and children. Everywhere one hears those starving wails. It is dreadful beyond description. Sometimes I wish I were blind and deaf so as not to see those faces or hear those unspeakable sounds of misery. There are hardly any animals on the streets any more — probably they're all eaten. Once in a great while a gaunt horse appears — of the kind one pictures Death riding — with hardly any life left in it, just an enormous frame covered with skin through which the sharp ends of the bones appear with terrible clearness, often cutting through the skin and forming the most ghastly wounds. Such a pitiful, suffering animal is seen dragging an immense carload of some unusually heavy stuff that in former days two strong, well-fed, splendid specimens of "Clydesdales" could probably not have moved without difficulty. As the horse creeps along, making supernatural efforts to advance, the driver runs along-side, nine times out of ten beating it unmercifully with every step it takes.* Once I saw a man, whose cart had stuck in the snow, use an iron stick to beat his horse at the same time flicking its staring anguished eyes with a long whip that never once missed its aim. Before I realized what I was doing I was in the middle of the street, shouting, "Stop torturing that animal!" while with one hand I tugged at the man's coat and with the other tried my best to pummel his back. But he knocked

me right away, and it was a long, long time before I could get up. I lay on the snow staring up into the cold grey sky, listening to the groaning of the tortured beast as it evidently strained and strained every muscle to pull the cart out of the snow, and hearing the steady thump-thump of the iron stick, as it descended on the horse's back. People passed me, but no one even glanced in my direction, thinking probably, if anyone thought at all, that I was dead or dying. It seemed to me that I lay there for ages, for presently it grew dark and at last the beating and cursing stopped. When I sat up and looked around me I saw that the man had gone, while the horse lay — at the very same spot where I had seen it last — dead! The man must have hurt me too, for my chest ached, my throat felt choky and queer and there was blood on my lips and on the snow around me. Just as I was about to go, two men suddenly crawled up on all fours to the horse, and, before I had time to look away — I saw them whip out long knives and start to carve the dead animal's flesh. Perhaps it wasn't yet dead, for it seemed to me that I saw its hind legs move. . . . Sick and trembling I crept away, keeping as close to the houses as possible, with my hands stretched out to the walls for support, just the way I had seen others do. Finally when I got to the hospital, I was shaking so violently and looked such a sight with my bleeding face and torn clothes that the horrified sisters literally took me in their arms and carried me off to bed where I remained for several days, unable to overcome that trembling that even now persists in my hands.

January 16
(January 29)

We are tearing down the house these days and have found out that it is no easy matter to perform. The hospital men, that is the professors, doctors and orderlies, climb up on the roof and do most of the wrecking, while we women sort out the wood and pile it in stacks and saw it. In a way it's lots of fun, like a great country outing, for the snow is deep, the air clear and brisk and the change most welcome after our wretched indoor life. The only trouble is that one gets frightfully hungry after all that exercise, and when one reaches the table — there's practically nothing to eat. At night we take turns watching our half demolished house and wood piles and must look very martial as we patrol up and down armed with big sticks. Last night I stood from twelve to two with Dr. B., Sister Natalia and Paula the maid. It was so cold that we had to keep moving all the time but the experience was truly thrilling as the Northern Lights played all through our watch, in the loveliest way imaginable; in fact I've never seen a finer display. It reminded me of a dream I had once, when I was a child. I dreamt I was standing on the edge of the world, watching the Northern Lights, when all of a sudden they twisted themselves into the shape of a great gateway, with pillars, arch and doors of golden light. As I stood petrified with delight the doors began slowly to open and I heard a clear voice saying, "Look child, this is the gate to the sky." Unfortunately I woke then, positively sick with excitement, to such an extent that my nurse kept me in bed all day. That dream im-

pressed me so deeply that I've remembered it all my life. Strangely enough the Lights yesterday actually took on the appearance of a great gateway, reminding me so vividly of my dream, that I half expected to hear the same voice call out those very same words again. We all stood watching the Lights and completely forgot our duties with the direst result, for when we resumed them — we discovered that a lot of our wood had been stolen!

January 18

(January 31)

Now the house is completely demolished and the wood piles nearly all ready. In one of the rooms I found, hanging in a corner, an abandoned Icon, evidently forgotten by the old man. With his permission I have kept it and now it is in my room.

February 2

(February 15)

Today we have begun to transport the wood to the hospital. We harness ourselves to little sleighs and drag as many timbers as we possibly can. It's hard work, as the snow is pretty deep and our strength none too great. This morning my sleigh got stuck in the snow, and I stumbled and fell down exhausted. As I lay there, trying to regain my breath, I suddenly remembered the horse that had been beaten to death, and the thought made me sick again. "In this case Life, not a man, is beating me," I thought and stupidly I felt so weak and helpless that I buried my face in the snow and cried and cried. "Well this *is* a fine sight, a bundle of fur in harness and a cap-

sized sleigh full of wood! ” I heard someone exclaim and looking up saw Dr. Rudkovksy, his kindly eyes full of concern as he bent over me in dismay. “ See here, let me unharness you and pull that sleigh for a while,” he continued, lifting me out of the snowdrift and slipping the ropes off my arms, as I stood up obediently, like a stuffed doll, only too glad to be fussed over a little and helped. So he harnessed himself to my sleigh, adjusting the rope over his left shoulder, while at the same time he arranged the rope of his own sleigh across his right shoulder, thus pulling at once two timber-laden sleighs of no mean dimensions. It must have been quite a remarkable feat to perform, for the sleighs simply wouldn’t run nicely side by side, but slipped to the right and slipped to the left, careening in different directions wildly as they went — then, suddenly they’d straighten themselves out and bump into each other, getting all tangled up and hit the poor man right behind his knees, and then start to slide and careen all over again, altogether acting in the most alarming manner, though due to skillful manœuvering, they never once capsized and we eventually reached the hospital without losing one single stick. Now in the corner of my room I have a whole pile of wood, the sight of which thrills me far more than any diamonds or pearls ever could. Who cares for tiaras and necklaces and such like things, when there’s wood in the room and how can one compare a cold diamond to a beautiful log of wood, that promises warmth? Lovely, lovely logs! Soon I’ll know the looks and size and shape of every one of mine, and I know it’ll be an agony each time I have to put one in the fire!

*February 12**(February 25)*

Wonders never cease, neither do novelties in this amazing Republic of ours. The very latest "scream" of fashion now is the appearance of individuals called "jumpers" or "hoppers." By means of stilts with springs in them these charming people stalk up and down the lonely streets at night, dressed in sheets that make them look like gigantic ghosts. Their faces have some sort of phosphorescent contraptions on them that shine in the spookiest manner and help to scare the unfortunate passers-by out of their wits. With each step they take they jump, thanks to the springs on their stilts, making enormous strides and quickly overtaking any unfortunate victim they happen to see. It's like this: At night time, when the streets are completely deserted and dark a peaceful citizen comes scuttling along like a frightened rabbit making himself as little as possible and trying to pretend that he really isn't there at all. Then all of a sudden when he's about halfway down the street and might as well advance as retreat, a gigantic figure appears all dressed in white with glowing eyes and teeth, taking flying leaps in his direction as terrified he changes his scuttle to a run. One leap, two jumps, three hops — and the figure has overtaken him and caught him. Before he realizes what is happening he is undressed and left naked in the middle of the street while the hopper hops on in search of another victim. These hoppers are the successors of the Hooligans that undressed people in the street last winter with the only difference that the Hooligans hadn't yet climbed onto

springing stilts and didn't wear winding sheets and glowing masks. But the principle is the same. The Soviet is very annoyed with them and destroys any hopper that is caught, right on the spot.

Here the diary breaks off again, not to be resumed any more, unless some day, when I go back to Russia, I discover the missing copy-books, sleeping like so many little Rip Van Winkles in the various caches where I had hidden them, patiently waiting for me to awaken them and bring them back to life.

The following pages were written entirely from memory during my stay in England in 1923 — shortly after I escaped from Russia. It was no difficult task to accomplish, as every detail of those days stood out so vividly in my mind.

Victims of the Revolution

AGAIN, as in 1918, the spring of 1919 was taken up with my medical examinations, which I was lucky enough to pass; again we spent a dreary summer in Petrograd, mostly preoccupied with the problem of getting some food somewhere and also trying to repair our clothes which by this time were gradually falling to pieces. All summer long I went barefoot in order to save my last pair of shoes and also three pair of stockings which, though extremely dilapidated, could still be worn on grand occasions. Strangely enough I never caught one single cold during that summer, despite the fact that my bare feet were often muddy and wet. Every day I used to run over to spend a few hours with my parents and every day I noticed a change in them. A little thinner, a little greyer, a little weaker they appeared to my anxious eyes and their pathetic excitement over any morsel of extra food, that I managed to scrape up somewhere, would make my heart ache in a dull and hopeless way.

"What have you brought us today, darling?" they would ask, pretending to be indifferent, though their eyes would shine and their dear old hands tremble from excitement as I came in the house, and how delighted they would be when I could produce a little piece of real bread, or a bottle of milk, or a few eggs. Once someone gave me a

custard for them, and when they saw it the tears rolled down their wasted cheeks as they gazed at it with awe, as though I had brought them a great hamper full of the most wonderful food.

"Our little girl always brings us something that she manages to discover goodness knows where," I'd hear Muzzie say very proudly to someone and those pitiful words would hurt like so many little stabs at my heart. To see them always hungry, slowly wasting away, getting weaker every day, was an agony that no words can adequately describe. And yet despite all their suffering, they were always brave and patient and cheerful. The General's voice got weaker as the days went by, but still he'd go about expressing his opinions as loudly as he possibly could.

One evening a large group of soldiers came to search the house while I was there, but luckily the General was fast asleep and never even woke up when one of the soldiers searched beneath his pillow, discovered his revolver and confiscated it with a great display of revolutionary indignation. That raid lasted a long time and many valuables were taken away, but the General slept peacefully through it all to our unspeakable relief. Goodness knows what he would have said and done had he awakened. The soldiers would either have arrested him and taken him to prison or else shot him then and there. Next morning, when Muzzie told him about the raid, he was very angry with us for letting him sleep through it and scolded and grumbled for a long time afterwards.

Then one day both he and Muzzie were arrested for

two hours at my uncle and aunt Kourakine's home, where they were paying an afternoon call. Suddenly, as they were peacefully sitting and talking, some soldiers burst into the house and placed everyone under arrest until the raid was over. Surprisingly enough the General took it all as a huge joke, Muzzie said, and had a lovely time poking fun at the soldiers, cracking jokes with them and chuckling delightedly when they'd laugh back at his sayings. They seemed to be an unusually good-natured lot, for they humoured the General and never once became annoyed. When he and Muzzie were finally released one man even gave him an apple and a few pieces of candy that tickled him tremendously. He saved a bit of that candy for me and produced it out of his pocket in a half-melted condition saying: "See what I've got for my little girl today."

Once in a while I'd meet him going down the street in search of a place where he had been told he could buy a few vegetables, and again it would hurt to see him so old and bent and shabby, as he shuffled along with evident difficulty, his breath coming in loud gasps. He couldn't see me until I came up quite close, as his eyesight was beginning to fail (that autumn one eye went totally blind), but he'd burst into a loud chuckle of delight when finally he'd recognize me.

"Well *Gubernatorscha*,"⁷ he'd cry, "how are you to-day? If you're as well as your old father you must be in fine shape. Yes, thank God, I'm all right," he'd continue. "Now, if only those rascally Bolsheviks —" and here

⁷ *Gubernatorscha* means "Governor's wife" a nickname he gave me when I was a tiny girl.

he'd start a long and loud tirade about them, while I'd look around fearfully to see if anyone were listening.

He was always hoping someone from the outside would come and rescue us — either the White army or the English, or the united forces of all European countries, and he firmly believed that soon, very soon, they'd arrive, overthrow the Bolsheviki and restore the old regime. "When the Emperor is back on the throne . . ." or "When our fortunes are restored . . ." or "When we go back to Troitskoe . . ." he'd say with the deepest faith that all those things would happen just as surely as he believed in God. And every morning he would watch expectantly for the arrival of those armies that were soon to release us, and every evening he would say, "Well, they didn't get here today, but tomorrow, oh yes, tomorrow, we'll surely hear of their approach." Often he would greet me shouting: "Great news today, Governor's wife, great news," and then tell excitedly how he knew, for sure and certain, that release was near at hand. He was getting weaker and weaker but his faith was indomitable. Sometimes it seemed to me that the weaker he grew the stronger became that faith.

One day as I was coming towards the house I saw him kneeling in the snow trying to bandage with his handkerchief the forehead of a Red guardsman lying on the sidewalk. It appeared that the man had slipped, fallen, and cut himself badly just as our General was passing with his basket of beets and potatoes. Scattering them all over the snow in his anxiety to help, half blind, pitifully weak and shaky, down went the General on his knees, doing his

best with his frost-bitten, swollen fingers, to bandage the man's bleeding wound. All he had was a handkerchief and his hands were shaking so pitifully he simply couldn't apply it to the right place, but fumbled and groped in the helpless way of one who is half blind, while his breath came in short wheezy gasps.

"*Zaika, Zaika,*"⁸ I cried, as I knelt beside him and put my face next to his. Only then he recognized me.

"Why *Gubernatorscha,*" he gasped. "Look what's happened. Can you help?" Of course I could help and did, for I always carried my emergency kit with me, but it wasn't the man and his wound that interested me in the least — it was my General, my poor gallant old General, there on his knees in the snow, trying to help a fallen "enemy." With the assistance of a passer-by, I pulled him up on his feet and brushed the snow off his coat as he leaned against the wall of the house, panting and exhausted. Then the soldier had to be helped to his feet, too, and turned over to a passing Red guardsman.

When I finally came back to the General the tears were falling down his cheeks, while great sobs shook him painfully.

"The vegetables, the vegetables," he gasped, "I've lost my vegetables and we won't have any dinner today." So down I went on all fours after the potatoes and beets, the nasty things having rolled in all directions; and finally got them safely back in the basket. How glad he was to see them again! One might have thought I was bringing him a basketful of pies and cakes! We slowly trudged

⁸ My pet name for him meaning "Little Hare."

home, the General leaning heavily on my shoulder and stopping frequently to get his breath.

When we reached his room he asked to be helped to bed. For nearly a week he lay there, so white and still that we were terribly frightened and had a consultation of all the best doctors I could get hold of. They said that there was nothing organically the matter with him, but that he was in such a weakened condition that any shock might prove fatal. It wasn't long before the shock came. On the 2/15 of November he stepped out of the house when Muzzie wasn't looking (I can imagine his chuckle of glee as he did that — for since his last illness he wasn't allowed to go out alone) and went for a little walk all by himself, taking his market basket along. Perhaps he had the intention of meeting me down the street, as that was the time when I usually came home.

It was then that something terrible happened to him, though exactly what we never found out! Just as I was turning round the corner towards the house, two men stopped me, saying rather breathlessly, "Little Sister" (I was wearing my Red Cross Uniform of course), "you had better hurry — there's an old fellow over there in the snow dying or dead. They say he was badly hurt by some soldiers with whom he had an argument. They say he is a counter-revolutionary, a General!" At the word "General" I flew, knowing only too well whom they were talking about. In the distance I could see a little group of people carrying someone into our home. I tore on. Never will I forget that horrible sensation as if I were in a nightmare, of my feet being heavy as lead, and the

sharp pain in my lungs as I ran gasping and swallowing the ice-cold wind. They had carried him, our General of course, through the narrow back door of the house (the front door having been closed by the House Committee for good, long ago) and up the grimy "black stairs."⁹

"Is he dead?" I cried, pushing my way through to him.

"No, no," someone answered, "only hurt, unconscious, dying. . ."

They brought him into his room and laid him on his bed. He must have been hit with something hard for he was badly hurt in many places, the wound on his head and the one on his left leg were the worst of all. All night long he was unconscious and tossed and moaned. However towards morning he regained consciousness, though not enough to talk. Only in the evening did he seem much better and even asked for some tea. The doctor from the nearby hospital of "Christ Our Saviour" left at midnight assuring us that the General was in no immediate danger.

About two o'clock in the morning he suddenly looked up at Muzzie and smiled — such a whimsical, puckish little smile, like that of a small boy caught in the midst of some grand piece of mischief.

"Well, darling, I ran away from you, didn't I? I was too fast for you — you couldn't catch me, but" (here his smile suddenly faded and his eyes filled with tears) "they got me — they knocked me down, they hurt me — oh, how they hurt me!"

"Who hurt you, who, tell me?" begged Muzzie.

But he closed his eyes murmuring over and over again,

⁹ Back stairs are usually called "black" stairs in Russian.

"Oh, how they hurt me, how they hurt me," until those words trailed away into a low moan of pain that never ceased until morning. Around noon he suddenly became conscious again to such an extent that he asked for the priest, whispered a little confession and received Holy Communion, sitting up in bed propped up by pillows and looking like a strange fluffy bird all dressed up in Muzzie's pink silk bed jacket, trimmed with ribbons, swansdown and lace. She put that jacket on him because it was so cold in the room and also because she wanted him to look as festive as possible for his Communion. We thought he'd protest but he didn't — on the contrary he said, "It's rather pretty!" in a pleased voice, patting the ribbons and laces, and kept the little jacket on until the very end.

About eight o'clock that evening, when we thought he was dozing he suddenly sat up, his eyes wide open, looking so worried.

"Why it's the Small One's birthday tomorrow," he cried, "have you forgotten? Run away into the next room, *Gouvernatorscha*, and let me talk this matter over with your mother."

When finally they called me back he was looking very mysterious with a twinkle in his good eye.

"Too bad that we haven't any presents for you tomorrow," he said shaking his head and using the familiar old sentence that he had used on the eve of every one of my birthdays since I could remember, while, according to our little ritual, I answered sadly, "Oh, never mind, it's all right," looking very disappointed and upset, much to his delight.

Later on in the evening when I was alone with him for a few minutes he suddenly whispered, "*Douschenka*, promise me that I'll be buried in my full-dress uniform with all my decorations — promise! "

Of course I promised, hiding my face in the pathetic little pink jacket so that he wouldn't see my eyes, but he knew how I felt for he laughed gently and said, "Don't cry, *Gubernatorscha*, don't cry," and stroked my hair and called me all the pet names he had ever given me, since I was a baby.

Then night came and Muzzie told me to go into the next room, as she wished to be alone with him. As I bent over to kiss him good-night, he pulled me down whispering, "Good-bye, *Douschenka*, good-bye, happy birthday and God bless you for ever and ever! " And as I backed out of the room he started making numerous little signs of the Cross in my direction. I see that picture as clearly to-day as I saw it that night: the room all in darkness save for the night-light near the bed, where he lay so thin and wasted, his white hair gleaming above the absurd ruffles of the pink silk jacket, his right hand raised as he made those rapid little signs of the Cross.

All night long I waited in the next room expecting to be called, but all was quiet, only at six o'clock in the morning I heard the murmur of voices but as I opened the door Muzzie motioned me to go away. "Leave us alone darling, leave us alone," she whispered, "run away to early mass, quick, or you'll be late! "

So I put on my hat and coat and rushed off to Church, returning about eight o'clock. At the door I was met by

Muzzie dressed in one of her prettiest frocks, that the soldiers had not yet confiscated, looking ever so lovely, but oh, so ill!

"Happy birthday!" she cried, putting her arms around me. "Look, I'm all dressed up in your honour. And come and see what Papa and I have for you."

"But can't I go to him first?" I asked.

"No, no!" she answered quickly. "No, he's asleep and I don't want to disturb him! I want you to have your birthday breakfast first," and she led the way into the next room where a little table was all spread out for the feast.

"See what we've got for you," she said gently. "Papa planned all this long ago and reminded me of every detail last night, so you must enjoy it as much as you can!"

I gazed at the little table spellbound — it was so long since I had seen anything of the kind, our revolutionary meals usually being eaten in the kitchen in the most haphazard fashion. But this was something lovely to look at! It made me think of my doll's feasts in the nursery when half was "make-believe" and the other half real, and also it reminded me of a certain picture in one of my fairy books that I loved specially when I was small: a picture of the golden breakfast table of the fairy queen. And though this table was not gold and was not laden with the strange delicacies of the queen — still it seemed as wonderful to me. First of all it had a snow-white damask tablecloth, a luxury that had long ago disappeared from our lives. Then in the centre stood a crystal vase with a bunch of beautifully made, though faded, artificial roses that had once

been a part of one of Muzzie's Paris ball gowns in the days when she was young and ball dresses were made of rich brocades with gold and silver threads. Next to the flowers stood a diminutive birthday cake, of real white flour, with pink icing on top, while beside it lay two small packages wrapped in tissue paper.

"This is from Papa," said Muzzie unwrapping first the square package. It contained a little silver Icon in the shape of a medallion with a very old painting inside, representing the three Strangers visiting Abraham — an Icon that the General had worn attached to a silver chain around his neck all his life. "This is his present to you, darling," Muzzie said. "His mother put it on him when he was a small boy and he never took it off until last night — for your birthday."

How well I knew that Icon, and the bulge it always made on the General's chest beneath his shirt, showing specially in the summertime when he had his light clothes on!

"And this is from me," she continued, unwrapping the longer package and showing me the gold and crystal scent bottle that I had loved ever since my baby days, when I cut my teeth on it and then played with it by the hour in Muzzie's drawing-room in my own special corner on the bear-skin. As the crystal bottle was covered with a trellis of gold, I used to think it was a cage in which a wee bird lived and always called it the "Bird-Bottle." Both the Icon and the "Bird-Bottle" are with me now and accompany me wherever I go. . . .

After the excitement over the presents, Tatiana brought

in some *real* coffee and milk. What a feast it was, and heaven knows how I enjoyed it, for I had not tasted anything like it for years. My mother had actually saved that white flour and coffee for my birthday and a finer feast I'll never have again. My only worry was that Muzzie didn't eat a bite, though she drank a little coffee.

When it was all over she got up and putting her arms around me gently said: "Now I have something to tell you, darling, but I wanted you to have your birthday feast first — the feast that Papa had talked about so eagerly last night! He would have been so disappointed if you hadn't had it. Now listen, he is gone, dear. He left us early this morning while you were in Church, just fell asleep, you know, ever so quietly. I was kneeling by his bedside when suddenly he raised his right hand, evidently trying to make the sign of the Cross, for his fingers were folded that way, but the hand never reached his forehead — it stopped halfway and is lying now on his chest, where it fell. Come and see."

Clinging to each other we went into his room. He was lying on his back, still dressed in the pink silk jacket, his right hand on his chest with the three fingers folded for the sign of the Cross, his face peaceful and calm. They had beaten him to death, they had killed his body — but they hadn't been able to touch his spirit!

All that day we stayed by his bedside, but when night came, Muzzie asked to be left alone with him again. "I have much to tell him before he leaves us," she said, "so go, child, go." And again I went, sitting in the next room, listening to Muzzie's voice softly murmuring all night

long. Several times I glanced in and each time saw her kneeling by the bed with her head on his shoulder.

It was a long time before we could bury him — eight days, in fact, for, as he was a General and consequently a “counter-revolutionist” there was much red tape to go through. Permits for his burial had to be obtained here and there in every conceivable way; begging, entreating, persuading and many times even having to bribe. In one instance we had to get the signature of a young woman, an official.

“A General? Pooh, who cares if he’s buried or not!” she exclaimed. “However,” she continued, “what will you give me to make it worth the bother of signing?”

“I haven’t much to give,” said Muzzie gently, “except, perhaps a pair of old white gloves and a bottle of perfume. It isn’t quite full either, but it’s good perfume, ‘Vera Violette’ you know.”

Probably the girl had never heard that name, but after gravely considering the offer for a minute she said disdainfully, “All right, bring it here and I’ll sign your silly old paper.”

Then a man asked for some of the General’s clothes, before signing his paper; another demanded his cuff-links and so it went, from one individual to the other, until finally the chief man was reached.

“What’s all this?” he asked. “Why hasn’t the dead man been buried yet? He’s been dead for a week, hasn’t he? Well, what have you been thinking about all this time?”

When he heard of the reasons for the delay he became

very indignant and insisted that the names of the various officials be told him. "This cannot be tolerated in the Republic," he said angrily, "where Communistic ideals must be understood, respected and properly carried out. People of that kind only ruin everything that we try to build up. They're as bad as the grafters of your sinful old Regime," and he signed the final papers right away, expressing again his indignation at the others' behaviour.

We dressed the General in his full-dress uniform but in the last year of his life he had grown so thin, and had shrunk so pitifully after his death, that it looked like a borrowed suit, especially around his neck and wrists. That uniform, which in the old days had been too tight for him, could easily have gone around him twice as we dressed him for the last time, and we had to stuff the part above his chest with cotton wool to keep the decorations from sinking in.

But when he was all ready and laid out in his room on the marble-topped washing table (the only table left that was long enough for that purpose) our old *dvornik*,¹⁰ who had heard of it, came in, gave one look, then shook his head gravely.

"You cannot bury His Excellency in that uniform," he said. "If any Bolshevik sees that he'll have it taken off immediately, besides arresting you for counter-revolution."

Others too agreed that the *dvornik* was right, so in order to keep my promise to our General and yet protect him from desecration, we put an old hunting jacket over his uniform and covered his legs with a rug that completely

¹⁰ House watchman.

concealed his blue trousers with their tell-tale red stripe. On top of the hunting jacket Muzzie pinned a large artificial red rose, another one of her old ball-dress flowers, and then he was all ready. As I have said before he was so thin, nothing but skin and bones like a mummy, that we could have kept him on at home indefinitely in those ice-cold rooms, and how we loathed to put him into that dreadful coffin made of ordinary planks, with chinks between them, a coffin that in the old days no beggar would ever have been buried in! With infinite difficulty and at tremendous cost a peasant woman had been found and persuaded to rent us her horse and sleigh for the purpose of taking the General to the Alexander-Nevsky Monastery where we had finally been allowed to buy him a grave. The woman had promised to be at the house in the morning not later than ten o'clock, but ten and eleven and twelve and one o'clock passed and still she wasn't there. For four hours we sat by the coffin, all dressed to go out, and as the hours crept by Muzzie grew weaker and weaker until I was sure she'd collapse, but sheer will-power carried her through and she continued to sit on that chair by the coffin, white as a sheet, trembling all over, but able to wait to the end.

Finally at two o'clock the woman arrived and with the help of Tatiana, the *dvornik* and several others we carried the coffin downstairs and placed it on the sleigh. It was the usual, poor peasant's type of sleigh, drawn by a shaggy, under-fed, little brown horse, whose primitive harness consisted only of ropes. To make the picture complete the woman was dressed in a ragged old sheepskin coat,

while her face, distorted and swollen on one side, from toothache, was tied up with a dirty grey rag. When we were ready to start, she climbed on the sleigh, sitting down sideways next to the coffin, and jerking the ropes called out in a hoarse voice, "*Nu, vpered* — forward! "

Off went the little brown horse, while we followed as closely as possible. It was quite a long distance to the Monastery and soon Muzzie grew terribly tired, though she wouldn't stop running after the coffin, not for a minute's rest. Presently she stumbled and fell on her face, unable to get up from exhaustion, while despite my cries to attract the attention of the woman, the sleigh went on, farther and farther ahead as fast as the little horse could amble.

When I picked Muzzie up her face was all bruised, her lips cut open and bleeding and her sealskin coat badly torn. As she stood there trembling, sobbing and helpless, gasping desperately, "Stop the sleigh, oh, please stop it," in a voice so weak I could hardly hear it — the *dvornik* and another man came running up.

"We'll carry Her Excellency for a while," they said, and lifting her off the ground started to follow the sleigh. But it had disappeared long ago and we didn't see it again until we reached the Monastery gates.

There we were met by a priest and taken to the Church where the burial service was read. That was the one and only part of that day that in any way resembled old times. In the dim candlelight the coffin, half covered with the silver shroud lent by the Church for the occasion, looked like a real coffin and not just a few rough planks joined to-

gether in a haphazard way; and the artificial rose on the General's breast glowed like a real flower, and again, as on previous occasions, the familiar prayers and chants proved hypnotically soothing, even though they were connected with the funeral of our General.

When the last words rang out and the service was over and we had kissed him good-bye and closed the lid for ever, we lifted the coffin once more and carried it out of the Church to the cemetery. On and on we went, down the slippery narrow paths, between endless rows of tombstones, until we came to the grave that had been dug for him. At least we thought it had been dug, but when we got there we found that the grave-diggers had struck and refused to finish their work unless they were paid in advance and given some bread besides. So the coffin was put down on the ground next to the half-finished grave, while Tatiana rushed off in search of some bread, not an easy task in those days. And while we waited and waited Muzzie sat on the edge of the coffin, as there was no other place for her to sit.

"He wouldn't mind, he'd much rather have me sit on his coffin than on the snow," she whispered, her eyes and lips swollen and her poor face all bruised from the fall.

At last Tatiana came back with the bread (luckily we had enough money with us) and the gruesome grave-diggers resumed their work, laughing, whistling, smoking, shouting, swearing and spitting as they continued to dig.

"Oh, tell them to stop making that dreadful noise," implored Muzzie putting her fingers in her ears and rock-

ing backwards and forwards in agony as she sat on the coffin.

"Can't you keep quiet, you fiends?" asked Tatiana indignantly, "out of respect for the dead?"

"What do we care about that?" they answered, and laughed and cursed all the louder. They seemed to be an endless time digging, but finally finished the grave. Then something truly wonderful happened—something that counter-balanced the unbearable horror of the grave-digging act. Just as the coffin was being lowered into the grave, we clearly heard the strains of the funeral march, beautifully played somewhere quite near by, the very march that would have been played had the General died before the Revolution and been buried with the military honours due to his rank. Then, as the first shovel of earth struck the lid of the coffin, a salute was fired, again as though it had been done purposely for our General. It all seemed too unreal to be true, but later on we found out that at that same time, a Bolshevik Commissar was being buried and given full military honours—strangely enough the honours of a military funeral of the old days.

A few months later Muzzie was arrested and put in prison. An individual calling himself Baron W. and pretending he was an old member of the firm of our great Court jeweller Fabergé, came to call on her in regard to her diamonds and other jewels.

"Naturally you have hidden them," he said, "and as I know how beautiful they are, having reset and taken care of them at various times, I want to help you to save them."

"But I haven't got the jewels here, they've been taken away long ago," Muzzie answered. However the man wouldn't believe her and kept on trying to persuade her to give them to him, until finally he got very angry and, dropping his suave manner and all pretence of being helpful and friendly, became extremely ugly and threatened her with all kinds of horrible things.

"Very well," he said, as he started to go, "if you don't give up those jewels of your own free will, we'll *make* you give them up!" And departed, slamming the door after him.

That very same evening he returned, accompanied by several soldiers who immediately began to ransack the place in the most thorough fashion, ripping open the mattresses and the upholstered furniture, tearing down the curtains and scattering clothes all over the floors. Tatiana, who had hidden some of her own money in the seat of one of her overstuffed armchairs, collapsed into it pretending she was too ill to move and never left the chair until the raiders were gone. Of course they didn't find any jewels, as there weren't any in the house, but they carried away a great number of other things, including rugs, pictures, tapestries, and every silver article they could lay hands on. They even took all the knives and forks and spoons, and when Muzzie asked them, "But what shall we eat with?" they laughed and answered, "Your fingers, *Starouschka*, you'll eat with your fingers if we are kind and don't cut them off before we leave!"

The so-called "Baron" was in a terrible rage, when he saw that no jewels could be found anywhere, and sneer-

ingly promised to come back again, "This time for your life," he obligingly explained. Next morning he returned very early at the head of six soldiers and with a warrant for Muzzie's arrest.

"Well, here I am again!" he cried cheerily as he entered the room, deliberately keeping his hat on and puffing at a great cigar. "Come on! Maybe in prison you'll tell us exactly where those jewels are to be found."

But Muzzie never even answered a word and calmly began putting on her hat and coat, while Tatiana rapidly packed her little overnight suit-case and handed it to one of the soldiers.

"What do you give me that for?" he shouted rudely. "Do you think I'm going to carry a damned aristocrat's suit-case? You must be crazy!"

Whereupon all the other soldiers burst out laughing and shouted, "Yes, wasn't she a Princess? Well then let her carry her own luggage for once, it will do her good!"

But Tatiana refusing to be bullied or frightened by them retorted angrily, "All right, you louts, if you don't know any better I'll carry this suit-case myself and follow her wherever you take her." Which she did, to the very prison doors.

They made Muzzie walk all the way from the house to the prison, never once stopping to let her rest. Surrounded by soldiers, obliged to go too fast, when she hadn't the strength to do it; prodded on, pushed, insulted, she nevertheless kept her head high up and though white and trembling, on the verge of collapse, went through the ordeal to the end. And *what* an ordeal it was, with

the "Baron" keeping up a steady fire of insults, the soldiers cursing and swearing, and the snow so deep she could hardly put one foot forward. At last when they reached the prison and brought her into a cell overcrowded with women, she collapsed and fell in a faint that lasted alarmingly long.

Only the marvellous kindness of a fellow-prisoner, an English nurse by the name of Miss Winter, whom the Bolsheviks had imprisoned for being a spy, saved Muzzie's life, for she was so weak she might have died had not Miss Winter done everything she possibly could to bring her back to life.

She undressed Muzzie and put her in her own cot and stayed up with her all night, giving her at regular intervals spoonfuls of condensed milk that someone had sent her that very morning. Then for nearly two weeks while she herself slept on the floor she kept Muzzie in her own cot and took care of her and fed her as much as she possibly could, giving her more than half of her own meagre supplies. Only when Muzzie grew a little stronger did Miss Winter stop sleeping on the floor and shared the cot with her through the rest of her imprisonment. I do not know whether Miss Winter is dead or alive, whether she was shot by the Bolsheviks or allowed to go free, but dead or living I would like to pay her this tribute; truly the spirit of Christ lived in her!

For a long time Muzzie was kept in prison and constantly questioned about her jewels and brutally put through the third degree. Then, when finally they became convinced that she had no secret cache full of jewels

anywhere, and perhaps realizing too how weak she had become, they let her go free, turning her into the street one morning and telling her to walk home. How she managed to get there in her condition will always be a mystery to me, but after hours of walking or rather creeping (she had to stop many times and sit down in the snow, she said) she got there, looking like a tottering little ghost, so unlike her former self that Tatiana screamed in horror when she entered the room.

All that winter Muzzie was terribly weak and wasted, and when they arrested her again we thought she would never survive. But the second time they did not keep her long and after ten days of imprisonment sent her home in a truck, for they saw that she was unable to walk.

The question of feeding her became a mighty problem. Of course she had a card to the Communistic kitchen, but it was of no use whatsoever, as they had nothing to offer except the same abominable stuff over and over again: dirty hot water for soup, with greasy circles on it, a bit of that dangerous so-called "bread" full of splinters and the dried-up carcass of a fish that often had worms in it. Frantically I searched for some extra food for her all over town, but all I could ever get was a cereal called *psheno*, potatoes and flour. Milk became frightfully scarce and eggs disappeared completely. One day I bartered my gold dressing-table set, that I had managed to hide, for a sack of potatoes, a sack of flour and a pail of milk, considerably diluted with water.

All this was contraband of course and I was lucky to get it, as we were supposed to eat only what the Com-

munistic kitchens provided and strictly forbidden to buy anything else on the side. But the town was full of illegal traders called "bagmen," because they always carried their contraband in great canvas bags on their backs. This particular bagman, who took my gold dressing set in exchange for potatoes, flour and milk, was especially pleased with the large golden basin and jug that belonged to the set. I know there were at least fifty various articles in it: scent bottles, goblets, mirrors, boxes, brushes of various shapes and sizes (not counting the smaller articles like pencils, nail-files, seals, thimbles etc., all made of gold and studded with amethysts); the usual dressing-table paraphernalia, though this one was exceptionally complete, having belonged to my grandmother, Princess Anastasia Lobanov, and therefore made in the days when such things were really elaborate.

"Won't my old woman just love to wash in this!" he exclaimed with delight at the basin, and was so pleased with his bargain that he gave me an extra bottle of milk.

Two months after her second imprisonment Muzzie was arrested again. This time they took Tatiana too and kept them both in prison for a week. Why they were arrested and why they were released, they never found out, as no one ever offered any explanation, things of that kind being done with the utmost simplicity.

"You're arrested and going to prison!" was all that one was told in the beginning of such a procedure and "You're free!" was all one heard when it ended, the victims having to draw their own conclusions and wonder what it was all about.

Muzzie's fourth and final arrest was in December, 1920. She had gone out to get a little fresh air and was sitting on the nightwatchman's bench in front of the house, when suddenly a woman slipped up to her, snatched her muff out of her hands, and running into the street dipped it into a puddle full of slushy mud. Then before Muzzie could move, the woman rushed back and, throwing the dripping muff right into Muzzie's face, shrieked and howled with laughter, as, blinded by the filth, Muzzie groped helplessly, trying to get it out of her eyes.

"Serves you right, you old aristocrat, why should you be sitting there enjoying life, when everyone else has to work?" shrieked the woman, striking Muzzie on her chest when she tried to get up, so that she fell on her back. As she lay there, utterly helpless, the woman kicked her and spat at her and beat her — until seeing some men approach, she finally fled. The men picked Muzzie up and helped her into the house where, horrified beyond words, we undressed and washed her and put her to bed. All day long she lay pitifully shaking from head to foot, crying, crying. . . . Of all the horrors I have experienced, this was one of the worst! The next day Muzzie was arrested again, and in the group of soldiers that came to take her to prison she saw the same woman, laughing in evil triumph. Later on I found out that the creature was the wife of one of the cruellest officials in that district, who lived on our street and spent her time persecuting the "aristocrats and bourgeois" with such venom and fiendish cruelty that finally it affected her brain and she died a raving maniac. As they drove Muzzie to prison in a truck,

I couldn't follow and see where they had taken her, and for days rushed on foot from one prison to another, trying to find out where she was.

At every prison I went to ask for her, they answered: "No, she isn't here!" and off I ran to the next one, getting more and more desperate as I knew she couldn't exist on the food they gave her there, and that the only way of keeping her strength up would be for her to get the provisions that I carried with me every day. In one of the prisons they kept us — more than sixty frantic people, all desperately trying to get news of the whereabouts of lost relatives — waiting for hours. Then suddenly some soldiers came into the waiting-room and without explaining why, chased us away, hitting us with the butt ends of their rifles. Finally after searching wildly for several days, I found Muzzie in the "Schpalernaia Prison," where she had been from the very first day of her imprisonment, though for some reason they had lied to me and told me that she was not there, when she actually *was*, all the time. Very obligingly I was told that she was *not* sentenced to death "as yet," but that when she was I would be notified and allowed to see her for a few minutes on the day before execution!

Following the advice of people experienced in such matters, I tried to obtain her release in every way I could possibly think of. First of all I went to an Important Man's house, having been told that he had a great deal of influence with the authorities, and that one word of his spoken in Muzzie's behalf was sufficient to obtain her release. For two hours he kept me waiting in his kitchen

while his dinner, a regular old-time, pre-revolutionary affair was being prepared by his chef, surprisingly attired in a white starched apron and a high white cap. "Well, if *this* isn't counter-revolution," I caught myself thinking as I stared at the chef in amazement, and then wondered if I wasn't becoming a Bolshevik too! Thick rich soup, a great big roast, vegetables, dessert, coffee and wine, not to mention such trifles as *hors-d'oeuvres*, white rolls and candy — the feast was complete, while I sat in a corner where I had been told to sit, hungrily watching every movement the cook made and hoping desperately that perhaps he'd give me something to eat. But he didn't! Only when the meal had been cooked, served and eaten was I finally admitted to "the Presence" and quite affably told, while it sipped its after-dinner coffee, that it would try and do something for Muzzie. But it didn't, and my tortures in that kitchen were all in vain.

The next place I went to was "Smolny," then the great stronghold of the Bolsheviks, where after hours and hours of waiting I was admitted to another "Very Great Presence," very great indeed! Here I was asked to sit down and my story was listened to without any interruptions or comments. When I had finished I was asked, "Well, and what do you think can be done about that? "

"I thought," I replied hopefully, much encouraged, "that perhaps you'd make an exchange: let her out and put *me* in prison in her place. You surely could do that! After all, I'm just as much of an old regime person as she is, being her daughter, and, as I am young and strong, can

be ever so much more dangerous to your cause than she, so old and feeble."

He laughed, then narrowing his eyes ironically said:

"Oh, I see, you're one of those so-called Christians and are being heroic in the spectacular way — sacrificing your life for another and all that sort of stuff: But let me tell you that that won't do in this country. Each one for himself now. If your mother's in prison it means there's a good reason for her to be there, even though, as you say, she's old and feeble. If *you're* still out of prison there's a good reason for that too. So nothing can be done about it, and that's final — good-bye! "

"But — " I began desperately.

"I said *final*, didn't I? " he roared, thumping the table with his fist. "Well, when I say *final* I mean it too. Get out of here! Be off! " And the next moment I was pushed out of the room into the corridor by one of his aides. After that there was no one else to go to, and the only thing to do was to hope and pray, and let events take their own course.

Finally, after weeks and weeks of desperate misery, Muzzie was let out of prison, this time to die. When the truck brought her home, so weak she had to be carried to bed, all swollen, her skin frightfully yellow, her eyelids rimmed with pus and her beautiful features changed beyond belief, the very first thing I did was to have an immediate consultation of doctors.

"If she stays here, there is no more hope for her, none whatsoever," they said. "On the other hand, if you can

get her out of this country and she is given proper care in normal surroundings, she may live; that is her only chance." Then they spoke to her about it and told her how absolutely necessary it was for her to get out of Russia as quickly as possible, before she was put in prison again.

At first she protested, but when I promised her that I'd follow as soon as I could, she whispered weakly, "All right, Cherry Tree, if you're coming too, I'll go."

After that began the most difficult part of all, that of arranging her departure. According to the existing laws of the Soviet government no one was allowed to leave the country, not even the old and sick — positively no one except foreigners. We then became acquainted with a strange form of exploitation, a device whereby enterprising foreigners (mostly Esthonians and Lituanians) married Russian women and, for as much money as they could possibly obtain, enabled them to cross the frontier as their wives. That accomplished, the marriage would be immediately annulled on the other side, to the satisfaction of both parties — the one considerably richer by a nice sum of money, the other having obtained her freedom both from Soviet Russia and her temporary husband too. Where young women were concerned these marriages sometimes proved disastrous, as the official husbands would refuse to divorce after the frontier had been safely crossed and would oblige their unwilling "wives" to stay with them. But in the cases of much older women it usually worked out in a satisfactory way, and quite a few escaped from Russia in that manner.

After frantically weighing the pros and cons of different

methods of flight (including the one through Finland, which however was absolutely out of the question for Muzzie as she could never have endured the physical hardships of that way of escape), we came to the conclusion that a temporary "marriage" was the only thing that would get her safely out of the country with a minimum of discomfort. So the next step was to find her a suitable "official husband." After a good deal of frantic searching he was at last discovered — a gem of a man who answered the purpose to perfection in every way. He was an Esthonian gardener by the name of Grasse, past sixty, very quiet and respectable, who seemed so reliable and decent that Muzzie decided "he'd do." As soon as she was able to be about, the civil marriage was performed by a Commissar, "justice of the peace" (or whatever his official capacity was in those days), and Muzzie signed the register as "Maria Grasse, née Princess Lobanov of Rostov." The Commissar squirmed a little when he saw "Princess" but didn't say anything, and the dangerous moment passed safely by. When we all came home, the man Grasse following at a respectful distance, politely carrying our umbrellas and raincoats (it had been raining hard that morning), Muzzie made Tatiana give him some tea in the kitchen, which he drank in evident awe, sitting on the edge of his chair apparently much embarrassed. But the funny part was that Muzzie would constantly forget his name and ask anxiously, "What *is* that man called?" Then having been reminded, she'd murmur to herself "Grasse, Grasse" over and over again, trying to memorize it, and then would suddenly forget it again! That he turned

out to be such a decent old soul was a great relief, and we began with an easier mind to look forward in earnest to Muzzie's departure.

The necessary sum of money was given by a wealthy money-lender who had been lending money to my parents ever since 1918. He also presumably was transferring to Europe, little by little, all the securities and valuables that they had managed to save from confiscation, and used every day to come to the house and carry something away: jewels, laces, pictures, even small articles of furniture. He was an unpleasant greasy sort of person whom I disliked at first sight, but, unfortunately, both the General and Muzzie believed in him and gave him everything they could. Often he used to tell them how much money he had already deposited in their names in a bank in Europe, and the poor old people would smile happily and express their boundless gratitude.

"Of course," he would say, "you realize how dangerous it is for me to be smuggling your things over the border. Why, if ever the Bolsheviks caught me doing that I would be killed on the spot. But for *your* sake I am only too glad to run the risk," and so on in that same vein. With tears in their eyes they would thank him over and over again and then delightedly tell me what goodly sums of money he had already transferred abroad and how comfortably we should all be able to live when finally we settled down somewhere in Europe. Italy was my mother's dream, and she kept saying what a lovely villa she would buy in Rome, where we would live very modestly "with separate apartments for each one of the children, and only

a good cook, a chauffeur, a gardener and several maids! " That was her idea of poverty, and often now I think how much better it was for her to die, when she believed in the possibility of such a future, instead of having to live through the bitter disappointment that was in store for her. And what a disappointment it would have been! For later on, when I came out of Russia I found that the kind-hearted money-lender had not deposited one cent in my parents' name in any bank whatsoever, though personally he had become suddenly and mysteriously quite rich and was living in luxury in one of the European capitals.

After nearly two more months of "red tape" in the matter of permits and passports, the day was finally settled for April 18 (old style), May 1 (new style), 1921. That morning we had the customary prayers for "those about to travel," and being a true Russian and therefore a great believer in omens, I was terribly upset by something that occurred then. According to custom, the only time one stands with lighted tapers is when one has prayers for the dead. What was my dismay, when suddenly, just as the Priest began the prayer for a safe and happy journey, I saw Muzzie light a taper, and stand with it the way one does during burial services. Tatiana evidently had the same thought, for she rushed forward, extinguished the taper and fell on her knees sobbing. Muzzie did not notice the incident, for she had a far-away look in her eyes that gave me a terrible shock. Then I realized fully that after that day, I should never see her again!

As she couldn't possibly walk, and the station was miles and miles away, we managed to hire a queer horse-drawn

vehicle, half cab, half shay, into which we carried her, after dressing her fully in bed. She was terribly jolted in that conveyance as its springs seemed to be broken, but she stood it well and even laughed as we rumbled and shook along. But when we arrived at the station, she discovered that her hand-bag had been left behind. Leaving her in Tatiana's care, I went back to the house, walking both ways. When finally, three hours later, I returned and started searching for Muzzie I couldn't find her, until suddenly I realized that I was actually looking at her without knowing that it was she. The fatigue of the drive to the station and the nervous terror of the journey ahead of her, had changed her in those few hours so inconceivably that I stood staring, unable to believe my own eyes. Even her features had altered. She lay back on the station bench, her eyes blurred and dim, seeming hardly alive in their unnaturally deep sockets. Only when I came up to her and she smiled the familiar sweet, patient smile, only then did she look like at least the ghost of her former self.

Horried, I drew aside the two doctors who were staying with her until her train left, while Tatiana stood by her making the most distressed faces in a frantic endeavour to keep back her tears.

"Do you think we can let her go?" I asked desperately.

"It's her only chance," answered Dr. P. gravely, "though I confess that even that chance is pitifully small."

"But," interrupted Dr. B., "if you bring her back to the same conditions of life and she is imprisoned again she won't even have that one little chance!"

There was only one thing to do; that was to take that

one chance even though it was so pitifully small, but still a *chance* to save her life! So we took her to her train that was standing side-tracked at the far end of the station, and laid her in a corner of the dirty freight car in which she was destined to travel. Luckily we had brought a good thick soft mattress with us, on which we put her, surrounding her with many pillows and covering her with warm blankets. Then next to her I placed within reach all the food we had managed to collect: several bottles of milk, hard-boiled eggs, bread, potatoes and fish and also her medicines and various articles that might be of use to her during the journey. That was all that could be done for her comfort — if the word comfort may be used in connection with that horrible freight car! The only thing that cheered me a little was the fact that a very eminent doctor of medicine and his wife were travelling in that same car, as well as two Red Cross nurses, and they all promised to do their best for Muzzie while they were with her. Unfortunately they were not going as far as the frontier. The man Grasse was there also, and I felt that he also could be relied on, as he was truly decent and kind.

The train though due to start at 5 P.M. did not leave until midnight, so when everyone of our small party had bid Muzzie good-bye, I remained with her alone. Creeping under her blankets I stayed there with her until it was time to go. Those hours spent together on that mattress, beneath the blankets, in the total darkness of the freight car, surrounded by so many unknown human beings, seemed to bring us closer to each other than we had been even during our very close companionship of a lifetime. In a way it

was unreal, as though we were both deliberately writing the closing chapter of our life together and her last words were the most perfect ending to which not one more word could have been added.

That freight car was filled to overflowing. I think there must have been at least two hundred people in it, not only on the floor, but occupying tier after tier of wooden shelves on which they huddled as best they could. Muzzie in her corner on the floor had one of the best places, and those kind people — the doctor and his wife and the two Red Cross nurses — grouped themselves around her in such a way as to protect her against any intrusion on the part of other travellers. When at last it was time to go I got out and stood on the platform, watching the red lights of the rear car as they grew fainter and fainter and finally disappeared from my sight. Then I walked slowly down the strangely deserted streets, only meeting from time to time patrols that did not arrest me because I was wearing my Red Cross uniform, though four times I was asked for my documents, which, of course, I always carried with me wherever I went. As I wished to be alone that night I did not return to the Hospital but went home instead; meaning by that Muzzie's room, which was the only "home" I had left. Soon afterwards that room was used for other purposes and then I had no home anywhere any more!

Several days later I received a note from Muzzie saying that she had safely crossed the frontier and was resting in quarantine in Narva, before proceeding to Reval. Though written in a very shaky hand, the note was quite cheerful and for the first time in weeks a ray of hope crept into me.

But on May 4 (old style) a strange thing happened. I was playing the piano in the room of an old friend of ours, playing all the tunes that Muzzie loved best, when of a sudden I stopped and turning to my friend said: "My mother is dying." Why I said those words I shall never be able to understand! It was as though someone had suddenly *made* me say them, when they had not been in my mind, just as if my voice had been used as an instrument to say those words, which were not mine at all. It was like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky and I cannot describe the impression it made. I sat horror-stricken, unable to say another word, while everyone else in the room (there were five other people present) stared at me in amazement.

The first to recover was Sister Vera.

"What do you mean?" she asked. "Have you had any news?"

"No," I answered dully, "none at all."

"But, my dear, then why did you say such a thing?" she persisted.

"I don't know," I replied, ready to cry. "Something *made* me say that."

"Come along with me," she said gently. "Let's go home, you have been through too much these last weeks, you are over-tired. Come along, dear," she repeated, bringing me my coat and shawl. Mechanically I took leave of my hostess and accompanied by Sister Vera and Sister Natalia returned to the Hospital.

"A telegram for you!" were the first words I heard as we all three entered my room. Still mechanically as in a dream, I tore open the envelope.

"Your mother dangerously ill — pneumonia. Shall keep you informed," the telegram said. It was signed by someone I did not know. Silently I handed the telegram to the Sisters and silently they read it. It was one of those moments in life when the only thing to do is to steady oneself mentally and collect all the strength one possesses to be ready for whatever happens next.

I hadn't long to wait: On the following evening, May 5 — that is on Saint Irina's Day, my nameday — came a second telegram saying that my mother had just passed away. Thus, my father died on my birthday and my mother on my nameday.

Several days later came another little note from Muz-zie, written to me on the very day she died. The shock of seeing her handwriting on an ordinary envelope *after her death* I cannot describe. It is something one has to experience to be able to understand.

Shortly afterwards arrived a letter containing all the details of her death, written by a Mr. and Mrs. W. Hvolson of Reval, whom personally I did not know, though I knew who they were. These kind people having heard of Muzzie's arrival and of the terrible condition she was in, went to the station and brought her to their house. Then realizing how ill she was (she had contracted pneumonia on the train between Narva and Reval) they had her transferred to the Hospital and had given her the best of care. Everything that could possibly be done for her they did, those kind people, but it was too late. Her one and only chance of life had been taken from her when she was stricken with pneumonia, and when that last chance

went — all was lost. She died in the Diaconissen Anstalt in Reval with the Hvolsons by her side, as well as an old friend of the family Count Ignatieff (married to Princess Ouroussoff) who happened to be in Reval at the head of the Red Cross. That morning Muzzie had Communion after which she seemed so much better that she even wrote me the letter that reached me after her death and asked Alexei Ignatieff to read her the Gospel aloud. But in the afternoon she became weaker and towards evening (he told me, when I saw him a year later in Reval), just as the sun was setting and a golden ray fell on her bed, that stood by an open window through which peeped a lilac bush in full bloom, she suddenly motioned him to stop reading.

“I am going now,” she whispered softly as he bent over her striving to understand her fading words. “Say ‘Our Father.’” And as he fell on his knees, holding her hand and praying aloud, while somewhere in the distance the Deaconesses began their evening song, she gently passed away.

Muzzie’s death seemed to have suddenly sapped my strength, and Hospital work became too hard for me. Much as I hated to leave the community of Sisters, even for a short while, having lived there almost continuously since 1914, I followed the doctors’ advice and spent a few weeks in the country in a Convent founded by a very remarkable young woman of good family, who had taken the veil herself and was at that time the Abbess. Of course, not being a nun, I was not allowed to live in the Convent itself, but had a room in the hostelry that had been especially built for pilgrims. It was a very long, one-storied pine log cabin,

containing about twenty rooms that opened on a corridor. The hostelry was run by one of the nuns and the rules were strictly monastic. My room, or cell as it was called, was so tiny that all it could contain was a narrow iron bedstead, a diminutive washing-table and a chair. The walls of the cell were made of rough logs, unpapered and unpainted, that smelt sweetly of pine. Through the window I could see a meadow full of flowers, and beyond, the great dark trees of the forest.

I loved the place! After the horrors of the past years it seemed like one of Andersen's fairy tales become real, and I would often think of his words "Out of the forest comes the thrill of the nightingale — 'tandaradaè.'" In fact I thought of those words so often, that soon I began to call the place "Tandaradaè," and that is what it will always be to me.

It wasn't easy to get there. When I left the train that had brought me from Petrograd — a train full of wild looking soldiers who, however, were quite decent to me and even helped to throw my suit-case out of the window when I arrived — I found that I had to walk twenty miles to the Convent, as there had been a misunderstanding about my coming and the one and only cart had left the station that morning without waiting for me. So, depositing my suit-case at the *Podvorie*, or small hostelry belonging to the Convent, I started to walk those twenty miles, though I was pretty wobbly in those days. Amazingly enough, I did it in about ten hours, stopping frequently on the way to rest a little, and hobbled into the Convent just as it was growing dark. There I was warmly received and fed and immediately sent to bed.

I'll never forget the wonderful feeling of stretching out in that hard bed after such a walk, luxuriously looking forward to a night of real rest — and then suddenly the horror of the discovery that my bed was full of bugs! What a disappointment *that* was, and what a night I spent! The minute I lit the candle the bugs would hurriedly disappear with such inconceivable rapidity that I could barely catch more than one or two, then as soon as I put the light out, they would all troop back again, as fast as they had gone. At last in despair I left the bed, climbed on a chair, tucking my legs under me so that the bugs wouldn't use them as ladders — and spent all night, sitting there, candle in hand, watching for the little brutes to appear. The next morning when I told our Nun about my sad experience she was very much upset and said that that room had not been occupied for weeks, not since another pilgrim had lived in it and that probably he had brought the bugs with him. She gave me another cell right away, this time a lovely little one, clean and sweet-smelling, in which I lived all the while I was at the Convent.

As I rested and grew stronger I was allowed to help the Nuns in their various activities. I worked in the meadows, field and forest, raking hay with them, gathering the harvest and picking mushrooms and berries. I wanted to help in the hospital too, but the Abbess would not let me, saying that it was healthier for me to work out of doors. And what a healthy life it was! I would get up at sunrise, when the Church bell rang for morning prayers, then after a breakfast of milk and real rye bread, would accompany the Nuns, wherever they went, learning their

ways and also their songs, for they sang all the time (to prevent any sinful chatter I suppose!). It was interesting to study their different types and learn why they had decided to enter the Convent. Young, middle-aged, old, educated and uneducated, most all of them peasant girls, there was something remarkable about them, and though there were many, I never knew one that I did not like. Even the Bolsheviks were fascinated by that Convent and had left it undisturbed, frankly admitting that it was an ideal "community of workers" and therefore something that should not be destroyed. Of course they deplored the religious side of this "workers' community" and sent a commissar to keep a watchful eye on it, but she turned out to be a very nice person, who soon fell under the spell of the Convent and worked everywhere with the Nuns, whom she openly adored, though she never once entered the Church.

I grew so fond of the place that I began to think seriously of spending the winter there, when my plans were changed by a fresh disaster. One night, it must have been about one o'clock, I was awakened by a horrible choking sensation and the next thing I became aware of was a weird crackling sound. As I sprang out of bed I saw that the outer wall of my cell was on fire, while the flames and smoke poured in through the open window. Realizing that there was no time to dress, nor to save any of my possessions, I dashed into the corridor that was full of smoke, and running into the rooms where the pilgrims were sleeping started to wake them up. The first room I flew into was occupied by an old pilgrim whom I had to shake in

order to awaken him. He was so shocked when he saw me standing there in my nightgown that he screamed angrily, "Woman, begone! Have you no shame!" However he quickly gathered that I had not come as a temptation and nimbly hopped out of the window! In the second room there were two girls and one of them became so excited that instead of jumping out of the window she sat down on the floor and started to lace her high boots; boots that came right up to her knees. Only the presence of mind of her friend saved her: grabbing the boots from her legs and throwing them out of the window she screamed, "Jump," and they both scrambled out safely. When I reached the third room everyone was awake and busy jumping out of windows, so I jumped too, landing painfully in a clump of thistles, dressed only in my thin nightgown. What a painful jump that was! By the time we had all abandoned the hostelry the Convent had realized what was happening and the Nuns came pouring down the hill carrying buckets of water, while the Church bell tolled its sinister call for help. Soon the fire brigades of all the surrounding villages arrived — but it was too late. Due to the fact that the building was made of pine wood and that there had not been any rain for a long while, it burned down to the ground very quickly. The only thing for the Nuns to do was to take care of us, shivering in our night clothes. They covered us with blankets and gave us hot tea, and put us up for the night in the two reception rooms of the Convent; the women in one and the men in the other. Early next morning the Abbess sent for me and told me that their commissar had advised that I leave the Convent as

quickly as possible as the Soviet authorities were arriving to investigate the causes of the fire and would be profoundly shocked to discover a "Countess" living in the "workers' community."

"It would be impossible to conceal your identity as they'll demand all documents," she said, "and too dangerous for you to remain as you are the only titled person here. As soon as they find out who you are they'll probably put you in prison, so you must leave at once!"

Obediently I bid a rapid farewell to my beloved Nuns, who were weeping, and climbing into the cart that was waiting for me outside, was driven off to the station twenty miles away, just before the Bolsheviks arrived!

After leaving the Convent I spent the autumn in L. with my dear old friends and ex-teachers Barbara and Alexandra Schneider (famous academy professors of painting and art), sleeping on a sofa in their dining-room and paying a certain sum a week for my meals. It was harder than ever to get food and we were often very hungry. One day, I must confess, to my great shame, I was so desperate that I stole some of the food out of their little dog's platter, while he sat by watching me with great reproachful eyes. . . . Another time I managed to buy an entire loaf of black bread, still hot from the oven, and ate it all up then and there without so much as a drink of water to make it easier to swallow. Why I didn't die of indigestion is an unsolved problem, but as a matter of fact I felt very much better after eating that entire hot loaf, than I did before.

When I returned to Petrograd and the Hospital I found



WAITING FOR AN A.R.A. SOUP KITCHEN TO OPEN (PETROGRAD, 1921)

another painful surprise in store for me. Our friendly Commissar had been changed and a very intolerant man put in his place, who forbade me to live in the community because I was a "Countess." That really was a terrible blow, as the Hospital had been a second home to me for years and I loved it dearly. It was not safe to stay there for even one night, the Matron said anxiously, so that same day I started to trudge the streets in quest of a room to sleep in. Several of the Sisters accompanied me; otherwise I think I would have sat down in the snow in despair and not looked for any room at all.

Towards evening, after many disappointments, we found one that seemed more suitable than the others (personally I had reached the point where I didn't care what happened to me any more). That night I slept in my new "home" with my faithful old Tatiana on a couch at the foot of my bed. The room was an enormous one with two great windows and only one little Dutch stove in the corner. It had not been heated for ages and the dampness was so terrible that we slept fully dressed, wearing our coats and shawls. Tatiana even kept on her galoshes and a little soft bonnet with a perky feather, beneath the shawl that covered her from head to foot. She looked so funny, that despite my misery I burst out laughing.

"Laugh, your Highness,¹¹ my golden rabbit, laugh," she murmured happily. "It'll do you more good than anything else, may the Lord be with you!" For several hours, as it was too cold to sleep she talked softly, telling me all the stories she could think of in the drowsy voice that

¹¹ In Russian that title is "Seeyatelstvo."

nurses use to make the children sleepy. "And then," she droned on soothingly, "and then . . ." until at last I fell asleep.

Next morning when I awoke a fire was crackling in the stove and Tatiana, still fully dressed in her coat, bonnet and galoshes, though minus the shawl, was heating some water over a roaring Primus. How dilapidated we looked: the big dreary room, with its damp streaky walls, the unpainted iron bedstead and broken couch, the dust and grime everywhere and we two, looking so shabby and dirty.

"Can't I wash?" I asked, wondering whether I'd have the courage to undress in that ice-cold room and hoping that Tatiana would say "no," which she did, most emphatically.

"You can only wash your face and hands," she declared very decidedly, and I sighed a great sigh of relief, feeling much like a child that had been allowed for once *not* to wash properly!

We had bread and tea together that morning sitting on the edge of my bed, and decided then and there to clean the place and to try and get some wood for the stove. After several days' hard work we managed to make that room look quite decent, though it always appeared incongruous with Muzzie's lovely furniture that we dragged down on a sleigh, chair by chair, and the beautiful family portraits on the dirty grey walls. There I lived all winter, selling my few possessions in order to eat and to be able to buy wood. Prices were fantastic and nothing cost less than a million roubles. To hear us all talk one would have thought that we were multi-millionaires. "Can you change ten mil-

lions? ” we’d ask each other casually, producing the sum in question in the most off-hand manner out of the depths of a roomy hand-bag in which we all carried our “millions.” A trip on a street car cost from one to five millions, a bottle of milk a million, and so on. I sold the furniture in my room for one hundred millions. I remember when the N.E.P.¹² began and private enterprise was allowed to venture forth once more, how excited we were over the fact that bakeries and confectioneries suddenly re-appeared in no time, exhibiting in their windows the most delectable goodies. One day, having sold successfully an old silk dress (I used to sell my things standing always on the same street corner, waiting for some passing soldier or “bagman” to buy my wares), I decided to be reckless and treat myself to a white roll. Timidly I entered a bakery, ashamed of my appearance, and asked for a roll! The woman looked me over from head to foot, then said suspiciously, “Pay first — it’s a million.” I paid and was given the most delicious roll I’ve ever eaten. Nearly choking from excitement as I hurriedly swallowed it, I asked for another, paying in advance again, then another and another. When finally I couldn’t eat any more I realized that I had spent eleven million on eleven rolls! . . .

That winter I entered the Theological Institute which since the Revolution had opened its doors to women. A religious body, it was merely tolerated by the Soviet government and though not openly persecuted, still was viewed with a very unfavourable and suspicious eye. There were plenty of lectures to attend and I studied so hard that I

¹² New Economy Policy.

had no time to mourn over my exile from my beloved Hospital. My gaunt room hardly ever saw me except at night-time, when I'd return to the dreary place and get into bed as quickly as possible, without looking around too much. As the furniture and other possessions dwindled, the room grew uglier and barer, until towards the end it looked as empty as a barn. A very good friend of ours, a Mr. Michel Glazounov, brother of the famous composer Glazounov, kindly helped me to dispose of many things which saved me the trouble of having to sell them on my street corner. This was a great relief for which I shall always be deeply grateful.

In January of 1922 I went to Moscow for a few days to visit my friends the Djounekovskys. The General D. who was formerly governor of Moscow, and his sister Eudoxia Feodorovna, President of the Community of St. E., were living there with their relatives in a tiny apartment consisting of three rooms so small that they could hardly turn around in them, but happy nevertheless as General Djounekovsky had just been let out of prison. Those days spent with them were a welcome change and the happiest I had that winter. It was fun camping in those little rooms and we laughed a great deal, something that I had nearly forgotten to do in my dreary room in Petrograd.

During my stay I had an audience with the Patriarch Tihon, who was kind enough to be interested in my work at the Theological Institute. Moscow that winter was not so depressing as Petrograd. By that I mean the streets seemed to be in better condition and the population more

numerous and healthier, as people hustled around in a state of activity that appeared more normal. Petrograd was like a deserted city (whether true or not I was told that its population had dwindled to 400,000). It was in a condition of complete disintegration: streets unrepaired and so deeply covered with snow that one had to use big sticks to walk over the hills made by snow-drifts; balconies and cornices falling onto the heads of passers-by, who for that reason walked prudently in the middle of the streets instead of on the sidewalks; houses caving in on account of cellars flooded by underground waters that had not been pumped out for several years and consequently, becoming stagnant, created a disgusting stench. One day I was not far off when I heard a house tumble down. It created such a terrific noise that my first thought was an earthquake! Rushing with everybody else in the direction of the uproar I saw a most amazing sight — a house whose front wall had completely collapsed, leaving the three stories open to the world, just like a make-believe house in a play. The people living in those rooms were so dazed that they all remained motionless in the places where they had been at the time of the collapse and not until the fire brigades arrived with ladders to take them off, did they begin to move. It really was quite embarrassing to see those rooms suddenly opened for the whole world to stare at, at a time when their occupants were caught completely unawares. "Just like peeping through a keyhole," murmured a woman standing next to me.

In March I suddenly had an unexpected caller, Dr. Frank Golder of Stanford University of California, who

had arrived in Petrograd in January and, at Mr. Hoover's request, was collecting for Stanford University valuable books written in Russia during the war. While passing through London, on his way to Russia, he was asked by my sister Olga, who was then living in England, to find me in Petrograd and, if possible, try and get me out of the country. So, as soon as he arrived, he started looking for me, but due to the fact that I was not living at the Hospital and that my address was being kept a dead secret — he could not locate me for nearly three months. At last one day in March he found me in my room, appeared profoundly shocked at my half-starved and weakened condition, and then and there took me in his car to the main office of the American Relief Association, commonly known as the A.R.A. Though I had known of its existence since September 1921 and its splendid activities (had it arrived six months earlier Muzzie would never have died of starvation and would probably be alive today), I did not come in contact with any of its members until that day in March when Dr. Golder brought me into the main office and introduced me to Dr. Herschel Walker, head of the organization in Petrograd, and several other members.

The very first thing those kindly men did was to give me a good meal. Knowing exactly what a starved body needed, they gave me a thick rich soup and plenty of bread and butter. But when it came to dessert I could not swallow a mouthful, as everything sweet made me sick. I felt strange in that civilized room, seated at a properly laid board, with a white table-cloth, napkins, crystal and silver. Dr. Golder, Dr. Walker and the other men seemed

so clean, well groomed and well dressed, whereas I was so shabby in my old black dress, covered with spots, my old worn-out Orenburg shawl and my shoes full of holes. I remember how surprised they looked when, asking me politely if there was anything I'd like to have, I thoughtlessly cried "stockings — a pair of stockings!" forgetting that after all one does not talk of stockings at a dinner-party. The kind souls, though a little shocked, immediately rose to the occasion and gravely informed me that I would receive several pairs the very next day.

"And what else would you like to have?" they inquired solicitously.

"Something for my hands and feet — they hurt so," I answered timidly, realizing that I had shocked my new friends and yet running the risk of doing so once more, as my hands and feet were in a terrible condition, chapped, bleeding and covered with chilblains.

But this time the doctors did not appear shocked and promised to give me some honey jelly, though Dr. Golder tactfully changed the subject saying, "We'll make out a list of all you need most after dinner, but now let us talk of something cheerful." And soon I was listening happily to their amusing anecdotes about various experiences in Russia, laughing and forgetting the dreariness of my life. That was a happy evening and I'll never forget the kindness and tactfulness of those men, as they tried to cheer me.

After that I saw Dr. Golder and Dr. Walker several times before my two imprisonments, though always briefly, as it was not advisable for them to be seen

with a member of the Old Régime. Nor could they have me at their house for meals any more, as the Russian servants were spies and might have accused them of being friendly with a "counter-revolutionist." However they gave me one of their famous food parcels that the American Relief Association was then distributing in the famine-stricken areas. These parcels, carrying enough food to nourish one person for about six weeks, were tremendously efficient. First of all they contained a good-sized sack of white flour, a bag of sugar, ten cans of condensed milk, a little pail of lard, and a large package of rice. How well I remember my delight on opening that first parcel! I had to go and get it myself at the distributing offices of the A.R.A. and then drag it all the way home on a sleigh — which was not an easy thing to do, as the snow was in a half-melted condition and the streets full of slush; but when finally I got it safely into my room and opened it I could hardly believe my eyes. It seemed too good to be true, and the feast that Tatiana and I had that evening, of rice and condensed milk, tasted like some divine food of the gods. We could not stop eating and stuffed and stuffed until we could stuff no more. Later on I grew terribly tired of rice and condensed milk — to such an extent that up to the present day it makes me sick to see either of them — but in the spring of 1922 nothing in the world ever tasted better.

In those days, we often looked at each other and said: "Well, we're getting used to almost anything, but what would people from the outside world think if they saw what we do? Why, they wouldn't believe their own eyes, they'd think they were dreaming!" Truly many amazing

things happened, but of all, the most amazing to me was the birth of the so-called Living or Free Church, at which I happened to be present, in the house of a young priest called Alexander Vedensky. Of a strange Oriental type, tall, thin, round-shouldered, with an unusually narrow face, pale skin, raven black hair, contrary to the custom of our Church cut very short, a large hooked nose and great, black, glowing, hypnotic eyes, Father Vedensky was formerly an unknown young regimental priest who had followed his regiment to the war. He suddenly became famous during the revolution for his eloquent sermons and inspiring Public Confessions. The Metropolitan Benjamin became intensely interested in him and for about two years used to take him to the different churches where he officiated himself almost daily, and sometimes twice a day, allowing the young priest to preach most of the sermons. This, Vedensky did most brilliantly. The Metropolitan loved him as his own son, and everybody believed that the priest returned this affection. As a special favour the Metropolitan consented to be honorary godfather to Vedensky's new-born baby, while I was requested to be godmother. So together we christened the baby and subsequently I went once in a while to call on my godchild. It was during one of those visits that I heard a discussion between Father Vedensky and his friend Father Boyarsky about a separation from the Mother Church, and the foundation of a new "Free Church," on ultra-modern lines.

"What do you think about it?" they asked me as I sat listening in silence, unable to believe my own ears.

"I think it is the most terrible thing I have ever heard

of! ” I answered frankly, thereby starting a heated argument that lasted for more than an hour.

At the end of that time I saw clearly that Vedensky had already firmly decided to leave the Church.

“ Does the Metropolitan know about this? ” I finally asked, preparing to leave.

“ No, not yet, ” he answered.

“ All right then, ” I said, “ I warn you now that I am going from here to tell him about it, ” and left the room, going straight to the Metropolitan’s Palace in the Alexander Nevsky monastery.

There I found him at home and was soon admitted to his presence where I told him the whole story.

After I had finished he sat silent for a little while, then gently said: “ It’s a great blow to me, for I trusted Father Vedensky with all my heart. But maybe it is not too late to persuade him not to leave us. I shall send for him immediately and try to keep him with us, for he is very dear to my heart. ” Never a word of anger or reproach, truly a great Christian soul had the Metropolitan Benjamin.

That evening he was closeted for hours with Father Vedensky. What was said, no one will ever know, but the next day Alexander Vedensky openly separated himself from the Church, and the Metropolitan, although serene and calm as ever, appeared considerably aged! Soon after he was arrested by the Bolsheviks for openly condemning their desecration of the Shrine of St. Alexander Nevsky, patron saint of Petrograd, and their persecutions and constant plunderings of all our Churches. He was thrown into prison, together with a number of Bishops, priests and

laymen, many of whom were professors of the Theological Institute, and a terrible trial began.

To the great hall of the former Assembly of the Nobility, the prisoners were brought daily in a truck and questioned for hours. Counter-revolution was the main accusation against them; counter-revolution because they had opposed the persecution of the churches and had openly expressed their condemnation of all those that shared in it. With a group of Theological students and also many of our Sisters of the Community, I used to go every day to the trial. Day after day the Metropolitan would be questioned for hours, standing in front of his judges (mostly young Communists, dressed in the Red army outfit), no one ever offering him a chair in which to sit, though his feet were badly swollen and he suffered agonies. He would stand there facing his accusers, gentle and serene, answering their fierce onslaughts with such calm dignity that often I would think of Christ standing before His judges. As the prisoners did not have enough to eat and were weak from hunger, the Theological students and Sisters of my Community decided to take charge of one prisoner each and bring him some food each day of the trial. We would arrive with our little baskets of food, mostly boiled potatoes, and during the recess have them taken in to the prisoners. Luckily the Bolsheviks did not forbid this and it made us very happy to think that we could be of some assistance to those on trial.

One day, however, shortly before the end of the trial, the doors of the hall where it was held were closed by the soldiers and many people arrested, I being one of the num-

ber. After a good deal of sorting that reminded me of the parable of the goats and sheep in the Bible, the selection of new prisoners was finally made and we were taken out in front of the building where we were commanded to fall in ranks and march in good order to prison. Mounted soldiers headed the procession and closed it, while on either side soldiers on foot formed a solid cordon between us and the rest of the world. Luckily I was on the very end of one of the ranks and just as we were about to start I saw a woman whom I knew standing on the sidewalk and staring at me horror stricken.

"Please tell my friends that I am arrested," I sang out as loud as I could without looking at the woman, in order not to get her into trouble, but joyfully noting that she had heard me. After following me all the way to the prison, thus finding out exactly where I would be located, the good soul then rushed off to the hospital and told the Sisters where I was. By that she saved me from a fate that overtook many others — that of being lost to the world. I could not help laughing as I heard the fierce command to "March!" and the business-like martial "one two, one two!" of the soldiers as we started on our way to the prison. In fact I laughed so hard that I fell out of step and was severely reprimanded and poked in the ribs by a rifle.

"Don't laugh, for God's sake, don't laugh," murmured a soft voice on my left, and as I looked at the speaker I recognized the little wife of the Metropolitan Benjamin's secretary, who was also on trial and would be, so everyone said, sentenced to death. A lovely, very lovely young

woman, fairy-like in size, with enormous dark eyes and the sweetest smile in the world — she was on the verge of collapse for in addition to the fact that her husband was on trial and had hardly anything to eat unless she brought him some food every day, she had a tiny baby at home whom she had left alone, locked in their one and only room, with the key to the door in her pocket.

“ Oh, what will happen to my baby? ” she moaned over and over again. “ Who will look after him, who will feed him? ”

“ The world is full of kind people, ” I answered stoutly, trying to comfort her. “ They’ll break into your room and feed your baby, see if they don’t! ” This is what actually happened as we found out when finally we got out of prison.

When we reached the prison we were herded into a small courtyard where our personal papers were examined and a process of elimination began.

“ So and so is free, ” the man in charge would call out after reading a paper that evidently satisfied him, and: “ So and so goes to prison! ” he’d shout, rather joyfully I thought, when another paper did not please him. I had to wait my turn for a long while and, discovering a pile of logs in a corner of the courtyard, sat down and watched the extraordinary scene. In the middle of the courtyard stood the man who was deciding our fate, surrounded by several other men with whom he consulted about each paper, though it was evident that the final word remained with him. To the right were grouped those that were soon to be free, to the left — the future jail-birds. “ Quite

like the goats and sheep," I thought again and wondered how I'd be classified.

After a warm day it was getting very cold, as is usually the case in Petersburg in May, and soon I began to shiver in my thin dress, wishing desperately that I had brought some wrap along. By the time my name was called I was sneezing and shaking in the first paroxysm of a chill. As the man read my paper he gave me one of his joyful glances that prophesied, more eloquently than words, which group I was destined to join, so that I was not a bit surprised when I heard him shout: "Irina K. S. — to prison!" I trotted off obediently to take my place among the "goats." There I found Olga (the little wife of the Metropolitan's secretary), Mrs. Kovsharoff, wife of the professor of the Theological Institute (one of those on trial with the Metropolitan), and others whom I did not know. When the reading of our papers was over and the process of elimination ended, we, the "doomed ones," were ordered collectively "to prison!" while the lucky ones, at the same time, received the brief command to disperse in the direction of their various homes. From the courtyard we were taken to the basement of the prison, where we were divided into several groups; my group consisting of three unknown women, little Olga and myself. I think they were kind enough not to separate Olga and me, as they noticed that she was on the verge of collapse and that I was taking care of her as best I could under the circumstances. From the basement we were shooed upstairs to a room, where at a square table sat several men busily reading our papers all over again. One by one we approached

the table, answering all questions fired at us in low tones, as we had been warned to speak as softly as possible, so that no one, except the man at the table, could hear.

"What's your name?" was the first question they asked me, shouting impatiently, "We know that!" when I answered.

"How old are you? When were you born? Who were your parents? Are they alive or dead? Any brothers or sisters? Where are they? Where did you live before the Revolution? After? What are you doing now?" they demanded rapidly, shouting angrily, "We know that!" every time I answered.

"Well, if you know everything about me, why do you ask all those questions?" I retorted, growing angry in spite of myself.

"Be quiet, citizeness, and speak only when you're spoken to!" roared the chief man, glowering at me while they all made faces and shouted, "Silence!"

So of course I had to keep still, though to relieve my ruffled feelings I grumbled a little to myself in the way an old servant at home used to do when upset. I'd often wonder why he did it but that night I understood. It helps! After our examinations were over, we were taken, all five of us, to a small cell and told that we'd soon be given some coffee. That thought cheered us considerably and though it was a horrid sensation to hear the wardress close the door and lock it with a loud snap, the thought of a cup of hot coffee helped us through that ordeal and even made us quite jolly.

"Real coffee! Hot coffee! Think of that!" we kept

saying to each other listening anxiously for the footsteps that would herald the approach of that anticipated coffee, something we had not tasted for years!

"A treat in prison! Who would have expected that," exclaimed delightedly Elena Petrovna, the stylish member of our group, dressed in a white linen suit (fashionable in 1914), with all kinds of elegant accessories.

"Why, perhaps they will give us milk with it and real bread," said Anna Stepanovna, a comfortable old soul, stout and motherly, with white hair and spectacles, and though we could not believe in such good luck, still we kept talking about it and hoping, hoping.

Even little Olga smiled for the first time murmuring, "Perhaps they will put sugar in the coffee, what do you think?" while Maria Nikitichna, the thin, mournful spinster, sighed profoundly and said "any kind of coffee will do, as long as it is real coffee — that's all."

But an hour passed, then another hour, and still no coffee. Longer and longer grew our faces, and sadder and sadder became the look in our eyes. Suddenly we heard those long-expected footsteps, accompanied by the unmistakable rattle of cups on a tray.

"It's coming, it's coming!" we cried jumping up and down excitedly, while Elena Petrovna rushed towards the door. The footsteps stopped, a key started scraping around the keyhole ("Hurry, oh Hurry, we're famished," we pleaded frantically in chorus), the next instant the lock snapped, then the door slowly opened and a woman entered bearing a large tray, laden with a lot of dingy looking tin cups.

"Is it the coffee?" we cried, jostling each other in order to see what was in the cups.

"Coffee? Oh, yes, it's prison coffee all right," answered the woman grimly, slamming down five cups on our little iron table while another woman standing behind her with a basket threw us five small pieces of bread that we instantly recognized to be the usual "splintery bread" of our miserable everyday life. The next minute the door had slammed, the lock had snapped and we were alone again, staring aghast at the five tin cups full of hot water, that seemed none too clean, as it had tell-tale little circles of grease on top! . . . Such a bitter disappointment coming on top of all that we had had to stand that night proved too much for us and we all five burst into tears and cried, each in her own fashion; Elena Petrovna sobbing loudly, tragically wringing her pretty hands; Anna Stepanovna still looking comfortable and motherly, as the tears gently rolled down her once comely cheeks; Maria Nikitichna, hiding her hatchet-like face behind her thin, wiry fingers; and little Olga weeping uncontrollably, stretched out on our one and only "bed," while I, suddenly shedding years, cried as desperately as I used to when I was a small girl. And so we cried and cried until we couldn't cry any more, all sitting helplessly on that one bed, like a row of wet sparrows on a telegraph line. About noon we were given some more hot water (this time called soup), dried fish and five little morsels of bread.

An hour later the wardress came in again looking very grave and said that both little Olga and myself were to be removed instantly to another cell. So we said good-bye

to our three companions who seemed very much upset to see us go, Maria Nikitichna even saying gloomily that she feared the "very worst" for us. We followed the wardress down the winding iron stairs and went hand in hand towards our unknown fate. After passing through many corridors and halls, we finally arrived in a part of the building that looked unusually old and dirty and dingy, and here we were handed over by our wardress to a warden of very unpleasant mien.

"Good-bye, good luck," she kindly said as the man gave us both a little shove and growled, "Go on, hurry!"

I don't know why that scene reminded me of the silly story about the parrot who said, "Well, if I've got to go — I'll go," when the cat pulled him by his tail out of the cage.

"Well, if I've *got* to go — I'll go," I murmured to myself, laughing a little.

"What on earth are you smiling about?" the warden asked angrily.

"Nothing, just a funny story," I answered, whereupon he shouted:

"Funny story? You'll be told a funny story soon if you don't look out," while Olga whispered pleadingly:

"Please, oh, please, don't make him angry!"

At the end of the dark corridor we were ushered into an enormous cell, full of women. In the dim light it seemed to me that there were at least a hundred there, but later on I counted them and there were only sixty.

As the jailer pushed us in the cell and slammed the bars behind us, we were greeted by howls of derision.

"Hey, you, bourgeois, where in the devil did you come from? Wouldn't you like a perfumed bath, ladies? Some dinner? Champagne? White gloves? A drive in an automobile? Your Highness, may I present myself? Your Excellency, would you care to shake hands?" and so forth, as on all sides we were surrounded by the most awful specimens of womankind imaginable.

"*Mégères de la révolution*," flashed through my mind; "The women of the underworld that a revolution brings to the surface." But why should *they* be here in prison? However *that* I never found out. Hags, most of them, hideous, dirty, evil looking, evil smelling, all shrieking, yelling, howling with a great display of wild gestures. The air was thick with stench and foul words as the hags, like witches on broomsticks, turned around us in a frenzied saturnalia.

"Hey, you —" roared the jailer through the bars, "Leave those alone, hear me? Or I'll beat you with a whip." Reluctantly they obeyed and retreated to their cots, leaving us for the time being in peace.

"Here you two new ones!" called the jailer who had been watching us between the bars of the door. "Don't stand there like a couple of *douras* (fools); go to your cot and stay there!"

"But where is that cot?" I asked.

"Call Martha and she'll show you where it is," he growled, rattling the bars, which we soon discovered was a most unpleasant habit of his.

At the sound of her name a tall gaunt woman came up to us and silently pointed to a cot not far from the door.

"Are we to share that one?" I asked.

She nodded, while several others burst out laughing.

"The 'Duchesses' want separate beds, do they?" they cried, and shrieked with laughter, seeming to think that it was a great joke.

The cot, an extremely narrow affair was covered with what looked like a dirty grey spread, dotted with little brown spots irregularly spaced. To our horror, on coming nearer, we saw that the spots were moving and on closer inspection discovered that they were actually bed bugs, so fat and sluggish that they could hardly crawl.

"What shall we do?" I groaned, while the women who had followed us giggled and nudged each other in delight.

"I don't care," murmured Olga faintly. "I feel so ill that bed bugs or no bed bugs I'm going to lie down, I can't stand up another minute," whereupon she threw herself on the cot and closed her eyes.

Exhausted and half conscious she did not move even when the little brutes started crawling over her, while I busily picked them off her and threw them on the floor. But the women on the two neighbouring cots had invented a game to counteract my labours; a charming game that consisted of throwing their own bed bugs on our cot, flicking them with such perfection that they never once missed their aim. Then the nasty little creatures began dropping down on us from the ceiling and crawling up my legs until, frantic, I could bear it no longer.

"Jailer, jailer!" I cried, rattling the bars the way he did, "Jailer, come here at once!" Grumbling and growling he shuffled towards me.

"What's the matter with you?" he demanded angrily.
"How do you dare call me?"

"Because of the bed bugs," I cried desperately.

"Bed bugs? There aren't any bed bugs!" he shouted, rattling the bars as usual.

"Yes there are!" I retorted angrily, shaking the bars too, to his evident surprise and annoyance.

"Stop rattling those bars and go to bed," he roared, but I was so desperate about those bugs that nothing else seemed to matter.

"I'll rattle these bars all night if you don't do something about the bugs," I shouted back, apparently with such determination that suddenly he stopped cursing and breaking into a kindly smile whispered soothingly, "There, there — I can't do anything about them, the place is full of them, and the only thing to do is to bear it as best you can. I'm bitten too, but what can I do? Nothing, absolutely nothing! The place was quite clean until they brought in these witches, now it's hell."

Amazed to see the ogre suddenly become human and kindly, I involuntarily smiled back at him and returned to my cot feeling less angry with the world in general and for some reason ready to be more patient. But that mood didn't last long for soon the women started another game that was as exasperating as the first and infinitely more dangerous. What it was all about I didn't know, but they threw dice and then the winner would loudly announce that she had won some article of clothing belonging to the "Duchesses," meaning Olga and me. Evidently we were the involuntary distributors of the prizes, for our clothes

were carefully appraised, and then the following kind of comments would take place:

"Listen Sacha, if I win — I take her shoes," or "Matrona, if you win you can have her stockings," and so forth and so on. At first it was all verbal, but when they tried to take Olga's shoes off in earnest — I rushed back to the door and rattled the old bars again shouting:

"Jailer, oh, jailer — quick! "

"What's the matter now? " he yelled, furious again. "Won't you ever be quiet and let me sleep — it's past midnight! "

"I don't care," I cried, "these women are playing a vile game and the winner gets our clothes — look! " I added, pointing to the cot where several hags were busily pulling off Olga's stockings.

"Stop it, you hell cats, stop it! " roared the jailer, opening the door, making a rush at the women and scattering them in all directions. "Didn't I forbid that game? Well try it again and see what happens to you. I swear I won't let you off as easily as last time."

His words seemed to have the desired effect on the creatures, for they stopped playing their game and after that left us in peace. All that night Olga lay in a state of half sleep, half stupor, and all night long I stood by her bed ready to drop from fatigue but never once daring to sit down on that loathsome cot. Around the bars of the door there seemed to be fewer bugs, and that's where I would go from time to time, hanging on to the bars to rest myself.

"You look just like a sentinel," said one of the women as she came up to talk to me. "I can't sleep without a

sleeping powder, and they won't give me any here," she moaned.

"But how can you sleep with all those bugs?" I asked.

"Oh, they don't bother me any more," she answered.

"I'm used to them by now and they always attack newcomers and leave us old timers comparatively undisturbed."

I've wondered if that was true; if so, bugs must certainly have great intelligence to figure out that newcomers are a tastier novelty, one might say, in their menu.

In the early morning Olga and I were again taken to be questioned, but by different men this time, and then, without any explanations but to our immeasurable relief, were transferred back to the newer section of the prison, where we were put in a tiny cell together without any other companions. It was a clean little place, about the size of a diminutive bathroom, with a cement floor, one small window high up near the ceiling so that the prisoners couldn't look out, one narrow cot that was attached to the wall by two chains and consequently could either be drawn up flat against the wall or else let down for sleeping, an iron table and two small iron seats that were attached like the cot by chains to the wall, and a toilet that completed the furnishings. The dingy walls had evidently been painted a pale green years ago, but now they were literally covered with the diaries of political prisoners dating from 1905 up to the time of our imprisonment; this was the most interesting feature of our cell. It was wonderful to read those daily records of prison life and by the time I left I knew them all by heart. There were a few poems too, and one especially beautiful, was written by a member

of the Souvorine family (owners of one of our greatest newspapers the *Novoie Vremia*), a young girl, who, so we were told, died in our cell shortly before our arrival. I memorized the poem and afterwards when I was released, wrote it down and sent it to one of her family, but I do not know whether it was ever received.

The cell was so clean that to our mortification we discovered that *we* were the only dirty things in it — having brought with us in our clothes a number of those beastly bed bugs from the disgusting “hell-cell.” So after a serious consultation we began a regular hunt on our own persons, never stopping until the last bug was caught and safely destroyed. On the wall among the diaries we discovered a little wall-tapping code with explanations. We immediately started to experiment with it and received at once answering taps from the cells to our right and our left and from below — much to our delight. Then, climbing on to each other’s shoulders in turn, we peeked out of the window and saw that we were located above a small square courtyard with one solitary tree growing in its exact centre. A guard with a rifle was walking around that tree, glancing up constantly at the windows, probably to make sure that no prisoner was looking out, and once we saw him raise his rifle and point it at a window, though we couldn’t see anyone behind it.

Later on we became experts at climbing up on to that narrow window ledge and at communicating with the other prisoners by way of signs when the guard had his back turned. Once the wardress caught us at it and threatened us with a visit to the “cork-room” — a place not bigger than

a telephone booth, so we were told, with all four walls, ceiling and floor entirely made of cork without any windows or holes or any other kind of ventilation whatsoever. It first affected the pores of the victim, who after a short while would begin to perspire, then stifle and then finally choke to death, if left too long. Whether such a place really existed or not we never found out as we luckily never saw it, but the description of it impressed us so deeply that whenever we were threatened with a visit to the "cork-room," we'd instantly stop our transgressions, and obey the rules to the smallest detail.

During the first day in that cell I was sent a basket of food from the Hospital Sisters (who knew where I was, thanks to the woman that had followed me to the prison gates) and shared with Olga the same dreary old bread, fish and potatoes of everyday life. We had to give up one third of any food that was brought twice a week to the prison from the outside world, though in whose favour, we never found out.

Sleeping together in that narrow cot was a great problem as there was barely room enough for both and one or the other of us would invariably fall on the floor in the night, waking up painfully shaken by the close and sudden contact with the hard, cold cement. At last we discovered that the best way was to sleep in opposite directions, that is the feet of one next to the head of the other, though that was unpleasant too, as we'd frequently kick each other in the face. As we had a water tap in our cell, washing was simple and easy and though it was still very cold, we'd take daily tubs beneath that tap, at the same time allowing

the water to run freely over the floor thus cleansing it thoroughly too. Clean underwear was sent to us twice a week from the Hospital, and between times we would do a little cold water laundry beneath the friendly tap, therefore keeping relatively clean. Meals were brought in three times a day, though what we were given was hardly eatable. Always the same greasy hot water, dried fish, "splintery" bread and sometimes a rather horrid cereal.

At night-time we would often hear the rattling of keys and then the low cry of "Prisoner number So and So — gather your things, you are free," or else: "Prisoner number So and So — leave your things in the cell and come out." When we heard that second sinister cry we all knew that the prisoner in question was doomed to be shot that night, and then all the prisoners would softly sing the death prayer. Then we would hear the "turning of keys and creaking of locks," the slamming of doors, the tramping of feet and then the sound of a motor lorrie starting its engine, as it made ready to take prisoners to the spot where the execution took place. The reason why we heard those sounds so clearly was because the prison was built like a well; with tiers of cells all opening onto narrow iron balconies overlooking an empty space. A winding iron staircase connected all the tiers from the ground floor to the very top. For some reason the slightest noise would reverberate through that well with a booming sound, many times amplified, that was horribly sinister at night-time. It was always near dawn when the prisoners were either released or taken out to be shot.

One day as we were sitting on our cot telling each other

stories — as that was the only thing we could do, not being allowed to read or write or sew or play games — we heard a commotion in the well, followed by loud voices and the tramp, tramp of feet coming up the iron stairs. Soon the steps came closer, then stopped in front of our door, while we sat holding hands and shivering with fright. The next instant the door opened and our wardress entered the cell, accompanied by a man.

“Get ready to go to the baths, you two,” she said, not unkindly, while the man stood on the threshold and glared at us angrily.

“They should be shot, not bathed,” he muttered, spitting on our clean floor and cursing.

“But we don’t want to go to the baths,” we said anxiously. “We’re quite clean, we wash under this tap every morning. Please don’t make us go.”

“I’m sorry,” answered the wardress, “but I have my orders and you’ve got to go, whether you wish it or not.”

“Come on!” shouted the man. “What’s all this talk about anyhow — come on,” and taking each by a hand dragged us off the cot to the little balcony. “Now march!” he cried getting behind us and pushing us down the stairs, cursing loudly as he went, and kicking us and prodding us on with his fists.

At the noise he was making all the prison became very silent, then suddenly the familiar voices of unseen, unknown fellow-prisoners, broke into the great death prayer. Evidently they all thought we were being taken out to be shot and according to our own unwritten prison law were bidding us farewell. We were choking with tears, but not

wishing to appear weak and frightened before the man, swallowed our tears and marched on, hand in hand, with heads high up in the air. After going through endless passages and corridors, we finally arrived at the "baths" where, with a final kick and push we were shoved into two separate bath cubicles, where we found plenty of hot water in large wooden tubs and sweet-smelling birch rods with which Russian people switch themselves in order to better the circulation of the blood.

Just as I was about to undress, a slip of paper was pushed under my door, and picking it up, I read the following words: "Don't be afraid, friends are working for your release, it may come soon. The Metropolitan Benjamin sends you his blessing. In case you are sentenced to death Holy Communion will be given you. Destroy this at once. Don't say a word about it. Your friend." Bewildered, trembling, frightened, I instantly tore up the paper in tiny fragments that I then stuffed into a chink between the wall and the floor and then started to splash the water around the chink hoping to soak the bits of paper thoroughly. While I was so employed I suddenly heard the gruff voice of the Bath-Man at my door, saying, "Time's up, dress and get ready to go back to your cell." With shaking fingers I dressed, wondering if Olga had had a similar message and trying to think who *could* have slipped it beneath my door. Who knew that I was in that cubicle, who, except the kicking, swearing, beating Bath-Man? Did he do it? Had his cruelty only been a pretence to cover his real feelings? As I came out of the cubby hole I stared at the man's face, but it was as cold and grim

looking as ever, with no sign that he had slipped any kindly paper under my door.

He was already cursing and as I came out he dealt me a hard blow on the back.

"Hurry, hurry," he shouted. "Are you going to stay here all day? Why they don't shoot all you damned aristocrats is more than I can understand! And why you're to be bathed is more than I can see, either, unless you'll be shot tonight. You know prisoners are always bathed before being shot!" he obligingly added.

Then Olga came out of her bath place and though the man swore at her and kicked her, I could see by the radiant look in her eyes that she too had received a note. Again hand in hand we went back through those endless corridors to our prison where we were met by our wardress. The man handed us over to her and without a look in our direction left us, forever. We never saw him again, nor ever heard from him any more, but as long as I live I'll always firmly believe that the fierce Bath-Man slipped those notes under our doors.

But all prison experiences were tame compared to solitary confinement. That indeed was an ordeal to live through, as no diversions were allowed: no reading, no writing, no sewing, no drawing or clay modelling — nothing, absolutely nothing but one's own company for the twenty-four hours of the day and night. It was then that I realized how much little Olga's companionship had meant to me, when we shared that cell during the time of my first imprisonment. After a brief period of freedom, when Olga and I had been released together and she had returned to

her baby, whom kindly neighbours had cared for during her stay in prison, I was arrested once more. It happened immediately after the desecration of the Cathedral of Kazan, where together with other theological students I had violently opposed the desecration.

"You are one of the ringleaders here, citizeness, and therefore will be severely punished," a tall, bearded young man belonging to the "enemies'" camp had said authoritatively. He evidently carried out his threat without much delay, for the next day I was arrested by two soldiers and a civilian, as I was going down a street not far from the Cathedral, and taken back to the same prison. The place had quite a familiar look about it and I was really glad to see my wardress.

"Now what have you done?" she asked severely, though with a twinkle in her eye. "I thought you'd have sense enough to behave and keep out of this, for some time at least," she added, trying not to smile as she shook her head and made clucking little noises to show her disapproval. "Besides," she continued, as she led the way to the cell, "you'll be all alone now, see how you like that!" I must confess that I *didn't* like that, not at all, and when she left me turning the lock with a peculiar singing "cling" that I'll never forget, my first sensation was that of choking. It seemed to me that suddenly there was no more air in the tiny cell and that I was going to suffocate. It reminded me of a nightmare I used to have quite often as a child; ¹³ of being all alone in a large airy room

¹³ I cannot describe the shock it gave me in later years to read a story, written by Edgar Allen Poe — if I am not mistaken — so much like that nightmare.

and then suddenly seeing it get smaller and smaller as the four walls would slowly advance towards me and finally press on me and stifle me and choke me, until I'd wake up shrieking. I screamed aloud and, jumping off the cot and rushing to the door, pounded on it with both fists.

"What has happened now?" demanded the wardress sternly through the grating in the door. "You can't make all that noise, shame on you! You're no longer a novice here and should know how to behave!"

"I'm choking, I'm sick, there's no air in here," I cried with such despair that she believed me and opened the door.

"No air? What nonsense," she exclaimed, looking at me attentively, then adding, "Wait a minute — I'll open that window a bit and give you a glass of nice cold water. Here, lie down," she continued gruffly as she bustled around the cell. "Drink this water, close your eyes and don't bother me any more — I've enough to do without you!"

"Just a minute," I whispered, catching her skirt as she passed and pulling her towards me, "It's the 'ping' of the lock that frightened me, it sang so cruelly. I think that's what made me sick."

For an instant she looked at me searchingly, then shrugging her shoulders tapped me lightly on the face. "*Dou-ratchka*,"¹⁴ she said with a ghost of a smile, but as she went out, she slammed the door with such a terrific bang that no ominous little "ping" could be distinguished in the noise made by the banging of the door.

Left alone I began to wonder what on earth I'd do,

¹⁴ Little fool.

during my waking hours! "What *does* one do in a tiny place like this with only one's own self for company?" I anxiously thought as I looked around the cell for inspiration. Then suddenly it came! From out of a clear sky, from somewhere in the back of my mind, flashed the message: "Remember the Hindu teaching of concentrating on thought and memories!" Jumping off the cot once more, this time in elation, shouting, "Eureka, eureka!" I twirled until I grew giddy. "Now let me see," I murmured to myself, when I could get my breath. "This has to be organized, which isn't very easy as I haven't a pencil and paper to jot down a program, but which, on the other hand isn't so very difficult either, as I have my watch and consequently shall be able to time my thoughts according to hours." So then and there I composed the program of my days. After waking and washing — simultaneously both myself and my floor — and breakfasting too (if that greasy hot water and piece of faked bread could be called "breakfast") I would think for one hour exactly on some definite subject. For instance: one hour on travel, one hour on books and so forth. In order not to get too tired I classified the thoughts into difficult ones and easy ones, and also threw in for diversion hours of gymnastics, dancing and singing. Thus my program was something like this:

7:00 A.M. get up, wash, dress, breakfast

8:00-8:30 gymnastics

8:30-9:00 singing

9:00-10:00 history

10:00-11:00 mathematics

11:00—12:00 M. dancing

12:00 M.—2:00 P.M. dinner and rest

2:00—3:00 medical problems

3:00—4:00 geography

4:00—5:00 travel

5:00—6:00 rest and supper

6:00—7:00 pacing up and down the cell

7:00—8:00 books

8:00—9:00 travel

9:00—10:00 and later, leisure for any kind of thoughts

When I thought about history I would take some definite period, say, English history from the very beginning until the present day, a little at a time, of course, trying to remember all I knew about the period upon which I was concentrating. Geography I would divide into parts too: taking, for instance, France, then Germany, then Russia, and so on. Mathematics were extremely puzzling and hard, as I have always been and always shall be an abominably poor mathematician, and without a pencil I would get so confused and impatient that I'd be ready to cry from vexation. Medical problems being quite fresh in my mind, due to my recent studies, were very interesting and so were my thoughts connected with theology. But best of all I liked travel and books. As I would close my eyes and think about, let's say Naples, I'd gradually see in my mind streets long forgotten, shops displaying wares I had hardly noticed when I was there, though evidently they had left an impression on my brain; signs, faces, little street scenes — in other words, the town would suddenly

come to life and instead of being still, as a photograph in my memory, would actually *live* full of colour and movement and sound! Truly a wonderful experience that I enjoyed more than I can explain. As for books, I used to think only of those that I knew well, of course, like Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, that I had read and re-read many times. And as I concentrated on some favourite chapter I would suddenly have the impression of *seeing* the words and reading them and even of turning over the pages. The more I concentrated the clearer both travels and books became until at last those hours were full of such pleasure that no travels in actual life, nor any real books read afterwards have ever been able to rival it! It was something like flying all over the world in spirit, I suppose, untrammelled and free, with nobody to hamper one's movements nor to delay the rapidity of one's progress. And I must say that that daily program of thought probably saved my mind, which, instead of becoming weaker in solitary confinement, grew stronger and freer every day, learning the great lesson of self-reliance and the power of living within one's own self!

Then one night came the climax of my prison life. As I have said before, dawn was the time when prisoners were usually released or else taken out to be shot and it was then that we would be awakened by the sounds reverberating through the prison well, of keys rattling, locks snapping, doors slamming and suddenly voices calling out softly the lucky or unlucky numbers of the prisoners. Terrified I often crouched by the door, listening to those weird noises, trembling from head to foot, with hands

cold and clammy and an indescribably sickish, sinking feeling inside. When the sounds would cease and all be quiet again, I would creep back into my cot and lie there staring up at the ceiling until it was time to get up. One night I was awakened by the same fearsome sounds, but this time strangely near my door. Jumping off the cot, as usual trembling and sick, I suddenly heard distinctly a voice say through my grating: "Number 34" (which was my prison number), "get ready to come out *without your things!*" A sinister silence followed those words, then all of a sudden the familiar strains of the death prayer filled the prison. Staggering, choking, gasping, unable to stand I fell on my cot, teeth chattering, nails digging into the palms of my hands, shaking from head to foot in a paroxysm of terror. Then an inexplicable thing happened: as I lay there shuddering, some part of my being began gradually to detach itself from my terror-stricken body until I seemed to be standing outside myself, calmly watching every move my body made. At first that detached part seemed like an hallucination, weak and unreal, then it became stronger and stronger until I felt that it was really "I," whereas my anguished body was only a small and feeble part of myself. I don't know how to explain that strange experience, never having been able to find the right words to do so — but whenever I think of it I see and understand it. As that detached part of myself grew more powerful, my body stopped shaking and a feeling of great peace entered it, acting just as a narcotic does when taken during a paroxysm of pain. Was it a result of my faith of a lifetime, or was it my recent Hindu

thought-training? I shall probably never know, but it was a wonderful experience in the face of death. It must have all happened very quickly, probably in the flash of a few minutes, for by the time the second call came I was standing by the door, perfectly calm — if anything in a rather exalted frame of mind, ready to die any moment, “in a decent way,” I remember whispering to myself. “Now it’s coming,” I thought hearing the footsteps approach once more and stop in front of my door. Then clearly, through the grating came the words: “Number 34, that was a *mistake*, you are to remain in your cell.” Then the sound of retreating footsteps, followed by silence. It was then that I collapsed absolutely and completely, shaking and sobbing as, unable to reach my cot, I lay on the floor until morning, when the wardress brought me my breakfast. I must have caught a chill lying for hours on that cold cement floor, for towards noon I was taken violently ill. The prison doctor, summoned by the wardress in haste, declared that I had pneumonia and should be transferred immediately to the prison hospital. It was there that, fighting for my life for days and days, the word came that Dr. Golder had pleaded for my release, obtained it and arranged that I be transferred to my own Hospital. Before I could realize it, as in a dream, I found myself back amid old scenes, surrounded with familiar faces that I had never hoped to see again. That undoubtedly saved my life and soon I was on my way to recovery. Dr. Golder used to come and see me once in a while, though he did not think it was a wise thing to do, both for his sake and mine, on account of the spies that

were constantly following him, and who would probably consider it a grave error on his part to be visiting a member of the detested Old Régime. Consequently, not wishing to appear tactless in the eyes of the authorities he rarely came to see me. Thanks to his wisdom and great tact he was on excellent terms everywhere with all the Soviet authorities, who treated him with courtesy and seemed glad to grant him any little favour, though he rarely asked for one, keeping scrupulously away from any connection with political affairs and giving all his attention to the definite work that he was accomplishing for his University. But the strength of his personality, full of the greatest goodness and kindness towards all human beings, regardless of their political views, carried him through all difficulties and enabled him to bring wherever he went, his rare gifts of mercy, kindliness and understanding. Quietly, for he was a man of few words, he performed his deeds of charity, his right hand never knowing what his left hand had done, never boasting, never even talking about himself, but doing — always doing — something good for others! Though he was by no means a wealthy man, he gave right and left out of his own pocket, never refusing a request and often denying himself so as to be able to help those in need. His was truly a great and luminous soul, and the world lost a splendid man when he passed away.

My other friend, Dr. Herschel Walker, was a remarkable man too (*is*, I should say, for, thank goodness, he's alive and well). Much younger than Dr. Golder, though due to his abilities head of the Relief in Petrograd,

he worked indefatigably to make the A.R.A. the perfect machine it proved to be. With a real talent for organization, a quick eager mind, always alert, always on the lookout for something new and worth while to bring into his field of activity, he never knew a day of rest during all his stay in Russia. I know that, because Dr. Golder often told me so, always speaking of Herschel Walker with much admiration and respect. "That boy is doing splendid work," he would say over and over again, and then describe some little incident that would prove that this was the case.

Soon after I left the prison for the second time and was recovering in one of the wards of the hospital, Dr. Golder came to see me and said that he had some good news for me. He had spoken about me to his friends Professor Sokoloff, Mr. Asniss and several others, and they had agreed to help me leave the country, being only too glad to grant Dr. Golder a favour at last. Besides the fact that I was still ill (I was suffering acutely from asthma that summer) and very weak, they knew perfectly well that I had played no counter-revolutionary political rôle during these five, nearly six Revolutionary years (on the contrary, they knew that I had confined my activity to hospital work taking care of patients regardless of whether they were monarchists or Bolsheviks), and therefore saw no reason why I should not be allowed to leave the country, if that was what Dr. Golder wanted, even though his request was most unusual. They insisted, however, that my lungs be examined by a Bolshevik doctor who would then



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decide my fate (which he kindly did, saying that I was in a terrible state of health and would die soon anyhow). That statement of his I believe helped me more than anything else. At first when Dr. Golder told me about these plans for my departure, I wouldn't hear of them and cried bitterly when he persisted. Day after day, regardless of spies, he came to try to persuade me, until finally I weakened and said the decisive, "Yes, I'll go."

I hated going, having lived all through the Revolution and suffered and, as I thought, become an integral part of Russia. To go away now, when the worst of the storm was over and a new constructive era about to begin on the smouldering ruins of Old Russia, seemed a terrible thing to do.

"If I have lived through everything up to this day," I cried, "why should I leave? I don't want to go! If, as you say, I am too weak to go on and am dying, let me die here in my own country. That thought does not frighten me, but exile does — oh, yes it does. See, in all these years I have *learned* so much and *forgotten* so much too! *Learned* to suffer and understand that *human beings* come first in this world. . . . *Forgotten* all the fussy little things of life, that mean so much everywhere else and so little here, where we've seen death face to face every day and life as it really is — stark naked, terrible, but *real*. I won't be fit to live anywhere else! Wherever I go I'll carry with me this knowledge of life and death and everything else will seem so paltry and small. So please, please, don't urge me to go! "

"But," answered Dr. Golder quietly, "don't forget

that life and death are on the other side too, and that though they are not stark naked, as they are here, still beneath all the 'fussy little trappings,' as you call them — there they are, just the same as here. Go back into the world my dear and use the knowledge you were given through suffering to help other human beings."

The next day when he came I had decided to go, and the preparations for my departure began in earnest. There were many official permits to obtain, but as far as I was concerned personally there was not much to do, as I was not allowed to take any luggage across the border, nothing in fact except the bare necessities reduced to a pitiful minimum that could easily be packed in a tiny bag. Besides that I was allowed to have fifty dollars and not one cent more. That sum represented my entire capital and with it I was supposed to cross the frontier and start a new life abroad.

As I could not go on living at the hospital as a patient I took a room on the Nevsky Prospect with a charming woman I knew, Ida Alexandrovna S. and stayed there until it was time to go. When all my numerous papers and permits were finally ready (we were in October by that time), I went to Moscow for two days, hoping to be allowed to visit the Patriarch in the Donskoy Monastery, where he was then imprisoned. But I was not permitted to see him. So I sent him a little basket of food, accompanied by a note in which I said that I was going on a journey to visit my sister and asked for his blessing. I wrote that because he knew that my sister was in England and would therefore understand that I was leaving Russia, perhaps for ever. The guard at his prison door read my note at-

tentively and said, "All right, there's nothing wrong in it, he may have it!" and even told me which window was the Patriarch's so that I might station myself beneath it and wait for the blessing I had asked for.

"It's a high window and you won't be able to see his face," he said, "but if he lifts his hands, as he sometimes does, you'll see them all right." I did not have long to wait! As I stood staring up at that window, I suddenly saw two hands raised high in benediction. They seemed unusually long and thin and pale; "emaciated, ascetic," flashed through my mind, as I fell on my knees on the sidewalk, prostrating myself in the direction of those up-raised hands. When I lifted my head they were gone. And there I knelt, sobbing bitterly, surrounded by amazed passers-by, who helped me to get up! That year the Patriarch died, but as long as I live I shall always remember his pale hands lifted in blessing.

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